

Office of the Director

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20536



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

AUG 27 2015

The Honorable James Lankford
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lankford:

Thank you for your February 27, 2015 letter to President Obama. The White House referred your letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for a response.

Please be assured that the Department takes its obligations to enforce the Nation's immigration laws very seriously. Our immigration system is broken. The priorities established by Secretary Johnson, as part of the executive action, provide direction that enables officers to focus their enforcement efforts on public safety and national security threats.

This clarification of priorities has already enabled U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to revamp training and career development for its officers. It also positions us to work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to reform the pay system for these officers. This reform will provide greater predictability, improve mobility and flexibility within ICE and the federal law enforcement community, and reduce the administrative burden of the current pay system.

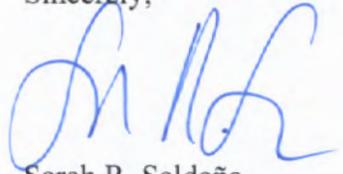
The Department's policies regarding the apprehension, detention, and removal of undocumented immigrants do not require employees to act in an unlawful manner. Prior to implementation of memoranda regarding these policies, DHS and the Department of Justice engaged in a comprehensive legal review to ensure their compliance and consistency with all applicable laws. As a result, the memoranda provide ICE with clear guidance regarding how best to leverage resources to enforce the Nation's immigration laws, while simultaneously working to strengthen public confidence in our immigration enforcement efforts. ICE is implementing these prosecutorial discretion policies to ensure that appropriate resources are dedicated to the identification, apprehension, and removal of those persons who pose a danger to national security or are a risk to public safety. In exercising this discretion, ICE expects employees to follow the lawful orders of supervisors consistent with the memoranda.

Finally, Secretary Johnson has directed the Department's employees to comply with the District Court's order enjoining implementation of certain executive actions relating to deferred action for certain individuals. The Department has no intention of violating that order or permitting any of its employees to do so. We will continue to implement the executive actions only to the extent they do not violate the District Court's injunction.

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Thank you again for your letter and your interest in this important issue. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact Jason M. Yanussi, ICE Assistant Director for Congressional Relations, at (202) 732-4200 or me at (202) 732-3000.

Sincerely,



Sarah R. Saldaña
Director