

## **More Fear and Loathing in the House Judiciary Committee**

### **Committee to Take Up Reps. Smith and Goodlatte's Restrictive Immigration Bills**

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**Washington, D.C.** – Tomorrow, the House Judiciary Committee is scheduled to take up two immigration bills that supposedly address community safety, but in reality are simply the latest attempts to restrict immigration and limit due process for immigrants. Neither Chairman Lamar Smith's (R-TX) "Keep Our Communities Safe Act of 2011," or Rep. Bob Goodlatte's (R-VA) "Security and Fairness Enhancement for America Act of 2011" (SAFE Act) offer solutions to the immigration crisis. Instead, Chairman Smith's bill would authorize indefinite detention for a wide range of immigrants, while Rep. Goodlatte's bill would eliminate the diversity visa—a lottery that offers 50,000 visas per year to immigrants from countries that send few people to the U.S. Once more, the House Judiciary Committee is using fear to restrict our immigration system.

While studies have repeatedly shown that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans, "The Keep Our Communities Safe Act of 2011" attempts to exploit the public's fear of crime to advance an anti-immigration agenda. The bill would expand the authority of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to subject certain immigrants to indefinite—that is, potentially life-long—detention, even though the Supreme Court has held that such detention raises serious constitutional concerns. The bill relies on the continued detention of immigrants—many of whom have never committed a crime—as a stand-in for fixing the underlying problems of our broken immigration system. Similarly, the deceptively titled SAFE Act simply eliminates 50,000 visas that currently go to immigrants from many countries in Africa and elsewhere that have less of a tradition of immigrating to the U.S.

#### **Mary Giovagnoli, Director of the Immigration Policy Center, noted:**

"The cynical use of public safety to justify dramatic changes in our immigration laws is a tired argument that must be put to rest. Whether the issue is eliminating visas in the name of public safety or justifying the detention of thousands in order to avoid dealing with institutional barriers to returning some individuals to their countries, the bills before the House Judiciary Committee offer no real solutions to our immigration problems. Proposing a bill that would increase governments costs, fail to use DHS resources against actual threats to public safety, put further strain on the judicial system and weaken due process protections by sanctioning indefinite detention does not make us safer. The pressure is on Congress to pass practical solutions to our very real immigration problems, not to use demagoguery and rhetoric—while ignoring the facts—to advance an anti-immigrant agenda."

#### **For more information, see:**

- [Rep. Lamar Smith's "Keep Our Community Safe Act of 2011" Creates More Problems than Solutions](#) [1] (IPC Fact Check, July 2011)
- [Diversity Visa System: A Fact Sheet](#) [2] (IPC Fact Check, April 2011)

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