

Immigrant advocates protest deportation of young student, call for prosecutorial discretion

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South Florida immigrant advocates will be at the Broward Transitional Center today to take part in a national day of action to protest the deportation of Shamir Ali.

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ICE recently announced that it had deported 396,000 people during fiscal year 2011. The agency's own numbers indicate that, "of these, nearly 55 percent or 216,698 of the people removed were convicted of felonies or misdemeanors" and "this includes 1,119 aliens convicted of homicide; 5,848 aliens convicted of sexual offenses; 44,653 aliens convicted of drug related crimes; and 35,927 aliens convicted of driving under the influence."

However the Immigration Policy Center argues that, "while the raw number is not in doubt, its meaning is far from clear," adding that, according to ICE, 55 percent of those deported (approximately 218,000) were "criminal aliens," but the definition of 'criminal' is overly broad."

The Policy Center adds that ICE numbers show that "40% of criminal deportations were convicted under the four categories of homicide, sexual offenses, drug-related offenses, or driving under the influence (DUI). The other 60% of 'convicted criminals' fall into other categories including immigration crimes and traffic crimes."

According to the Policy Center, "the real dilemma" for the Department of Homeland Security "is how it plans to reconcile its criminal deportation statistics with its new initiatives on prosecutorial discretion."

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