

The Immigrant's Journal

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Protecting God's Children From Distant Lands

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Sexual Assault Against Immigrant Women: A Human Rights Tragedy

BY MONICA RAMIREZ, SPLC

Olivia came to the U.S. from Mexico to escape an abusive relationship. But what the 46-year-old meatpacking worker experienced in this country was a greater horror that still haunts her.

Early one morning after a 12-hour shift, she found her car buried beneath a heavy Iowa snowfall. As she waited with a co-worker, one of her supervisors came walking toward her. The women were both wary of the man. He frequently made unwanted sexual advances inside the plant where they worked and was growing more aggressive.

Olivia's co-worker quickly slipped away. It was 3 a.m. and she was left alone with the man. He invited her to climb into his truck, assuring her that he would be a gentleman. She refused.



The supervisor punched her in the face. Olivia crumpled.

Dazed, she fought back, but the supervisor's powerful arms kept her pinned. He grabbed and tore at her clothing. She couldn't overcome him. He struck her in the head and dragged her to an area where he savagely raped her.

Olivia didn't report the attack to the authorities. She was scared of the police. At work, she tried to report the rape to management, but was met with indifference.

ence. She was even told the vicious attack wasn't so bad because he "left you in one piece."

Olivia responded the way so many immigrant women believe they must respond in this situation: She stayed on the job.

"I had a lot of needs and if I didn't go to work, what would I do?" she later told a Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) researcher. "I had to pay a lot of rent, many bills, my sick daughter, my sick parents who depend on me."

She buried the pain and shame of the attack. She had responsibilities to fulfill.

Tragically, Olivia's story is all too common among immigrant women working in the U.S. food industry. These women plant, harvest, pack and process much of the nation's food, but are routinely targets of sexual violence in the workplace.

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Immigrant Community Needs White House Muscle to Move Immigration, Politics and All

BY MARY GIOVAGNOLI



Plenty of people are calling recent events—especially the President's speech on immigration in El Paso—pure politics. And some are rightly criticizing Administration policies—such as record levels of deportations—as

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Malcolm X: Leader Extraordinaire... see page 14

Immigration News FLASH Finally! DHS Extends TPS to Haitians ...see page 10

Employers Beware: No-Match Letters Returns ...see page 5

Special Immigrant Juvenile Adjudications

BY JANUARY CONTRERAS

It has long been the practice of the U.S. Government to demonstrate global leadership by providing a number of humanitarian avenues for immigrants who are in the most vulnerable and desperate of situations. One such population is addressed in this report: children who find themselves in

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IMMIGRATION NEWS

NYC Public Hospitals Renew Commitment to Keep Patient Immigrant Status Private

New York: New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) President Alan D. Aviles and Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama have joined together to issue a reassuring message to immigrant New Yorkers who may not be accessing healthcare services for fear of having their immigration status disclosed to federal authorities.

The message, delivered in an open letter written in 12 different languages, assures immigrants that every patient has a right to healthcare privacy. The letter underscores the public hospitals' commitment to keep immigrant status completely confidential and to serve all New Yorkers regardless of their immigration status.

"For generations New York has been known as a city of immigrants, and for generations the public hospitals have cared for New York's immigrant populations," said HHC President Aviles. "It is important to remind immigrant New Yorkers that they can get quality healthcare in our city without fear."

HHC's promise of privacy reflects

Mayor Bloomberg's Executive Order 41, which directs city employees to protect confidential information, including immigration status, belonging to people seeking city services. Executive Order 41 was issued to ensure that all New Yorkers, including immigrants, can access city services that they need and are entitled to receive.

"A vibrant and healthy immigrant community is key to ensuring New York City continues to thrive and we are committed to providing critical and quality services to all those living in our City," said Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Shama.

The letter from Aviles and Shama states in part, *"We respect you and want to help you. People who work in a public hospital will not tell the Immigration Service or other law enforcement agencies your immigration status... Our public hospitals and health centers have a long and proud history of caring for everyone. That includes immigrants who are not citizens or legal residents and people who do not have money to pay for care. Our commitment is strong. It has not changed."* ♦

8-Year Old Rape Victim on U.S. Soil

Los Angeles: Eight-year-old Veronica was traveling north to the United States to meet with relatives when criminals stole her innocence. The men raped, beat, and abandoned the little girl in Chihuahua, Mexico. Rapid response by immigration attorney Jessica Dominguez protected Veronica from being deported.

After weeks of agonizing diplomatic wrangling and public pressure on Mexican and Salvadoran consular representatives, 8-year-old migrant Veronica,

a victim of molestation and rape in Mexican soil, avoided deportation to El Salvador and is now in U.S. soil safe with loved ones who are U.S. citizens.

Dominguez, who took the case pro-bono, spoke about the steps taken by various entities to save the girl from repatriation, including an impromptu two-day stand-off in the streets of Chihuahua by the girl's grandmother and family friend and rapid response by media outlets in Mexico and the U.S. ♦

America Is All About Immigrant Magic

Musician Carlos Santana blasted anti-immigrant legislation passed in states such as Georgia and Arizona labeling them as "cruel". Santana addressed his fans while accepting the Atlanta Brave's Beacon of Change award given during the team's fifth annual Civil Rights Game recently.

Santana has since been strongly criticized for his comments. The following is a statement from Angelica Salas, executive

director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), a community-based civil and human rights organization.

"We are proud of Carlos Santana for lending his powerful voice to the millions of voiceless immigrants who are forced to languish in the shadows in the absence of federal action on immigration reform. We agree with him that anti-immigrant laws passed by Arizona and Georgia are inhumane, cruel, and costly." ♦

New Statistics Reveal Detained Immigrants Face Significant Barriers to Justice

New York: Immigrant rights advocates have long decried the lack of due process protections in the immigration system, particularly the unjust consequences of expanding immigration detention. Recently, the Vera Institute of Justice has published statistics that document the striking disparity in outcomes between immigrants fighting deportation while free from detention and those who remain detained. These statistics reflect barriers to justice that confront detained New Yorkers, including severely limited access to legal counsel and community support, especially for the majority of detainees who are transferred to jail facilities in Texas, Louisiana, and other distant locations. The study confirms advocates' critiques of immigration detention, and raises questions about New York's collaboration with the grossly unfair federal deportation system.

The Vera Institute's findings reinforce the experience of those familiar with the deportation process. Ravi Ragbir, a member of Families for Freedom and an organizer with the New Sanctuary

Coalition, has witnessed first-hand the ways in which detention and lack of representation discourage immigrants from mounting a full legal challenge to their deportation. Ragbir commented, *"I've seen hundreds of people pushed through immigration proceedings simply because they did not have legal representation. I've also seen people so traumatized by detention that they did not exercise their legal rights in fully fighting their cases, especially if they also lacked representation."*

"These statistics confirm the lack of fairness in the deportation system our community experiences on a daily basis," said Mizue Aizeki of the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights. "There is something deeply wrong with a deportation system that allows the government to detain hundreds of thousands of people annually with so few legal rights—it is unconscionable that the government is creating even more obstacles for people to effectively fight deportation given that excessively harsh laws make deportation a mandatory punishment for most." ♦

Senators Reintroduce the DREAM Act

Washington, D.C.: On May 11, 2011 Senators Richard Durbin, Harry Reid, and Robert Menendez re-introduced the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Last fall, the DREAM Act passed the House of Representatives, and garnered the support of a majority in the Senate, but was ultimately defeated when the Senate failed to invoke cloture and proceed to debate. The sponsors of the DREAM Act hope to build on last year's momentum and continue to highlight the importance of fully utilizing the talent and potential of thousands of young people who are Americans in every way but their birth certificates.

First introduced in 2001, the DREAM Act would address the plight of young immigrants who have been raised in the U.S. and managed to succeed despite the challenges of being brought here without proper documentation. The proposal would offer a path to legal status to those who have graduated from high school, stayed out of trouble, and plan to attend college or serve in the U.S. military for at least two years.

Each year, approximately 65,000

undocumented students graduate from high school, many at the top of their classes, but cannot go on to college, join the military, work, or otherwise pursue their dreams. They belong to the 1.5 generation: immigrants brought to the United States at a young age who were largely raised in this country and therefore share much in common with second-generation Americans. These students are culturally American and fluent in English, growing up here and often having little attachment to their country of birth.

The moral, intellectual and practical rationale for the DREAM Act is overwhelming. The White House supports it. The Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Justice, entrusted with enforcing and implementing our immigration laws, support it. The Department of Education and America's academic and faith community support it, as well as state legislators, community groups, and the American public. The DREAM Act is even part of the Department of Defense's 2010-2012 Strategic Plan to assist the military in its recruiting efforts.

Despite broad support for the legislative proposal, the divisive political environment around immigration poses an enormous challenge for the DREAM Act. If Congress fails to act, the Administration can and should take more decisive steps to ensure that the values driving their legislative agenda are reflected in their implementation and interpretation of current law. DHS should ensure that its officers use their prosecutorial discretion to defer the removal of any eligible student caught up in the broken immigration system. ♦

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THOUGHTS

Osama, Obama and Undocumented Immigrants

BY RAFAEL PRIETO
AL DIA COMMENTARY

Since the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 the world has changed radically. The images of the tragedy of the suicide attack on New York's twin towers, the hijacked commercial aircrafts packed with passengers, and the subsequent collapse of the buildings, were transmitted to all parts of the world.

We watched as a plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington. Cameras recorded the pulverized remains of another plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field, after passengers rioted and prevented the terrorists from carrying out their attack.

That Tuesday was one of my days off from Univision Online, but I went to work anyway, filled with adrenaline.

What struck me most that day was watching people jump from the burning skyscrapers. I remembered the hundreds of times, in the late '80s, when I used to change trains at the underground station at the World Trade Center to take the Path train bound for New Jersey, where my love lived.

What I never imagined was that the terrorist attacks planned by Osama bin Laden would end up hurting undocumented immigrants in the United States, and lead to a collapse of the immigration talks between U.S. President George W. Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox.

Less than a week before the attacks, the American and Mexican leaders had exchanged views on the subject and, as a result of his experience as governor of Texas, Bush's international agenda had been focused on our southern neighbor.

But the world's most wanted terrorist, who was killed on May 1 by U.S. special forces in Pakistan, changed everything.

After Sept. 11, the country erupted in an anti-immigrant atmosphere in which undocumented immigrants became the scapegoats for every problem, fueling the invasion theory that has been skillfully



exploited by immigration restrictionists.

It's hard to make people with anti-immigrant views understand that on that fatal Tuesday, Latinos and undocumented immigrants were among those killed in the suicide attacks by members of Al Qaeda.

Statistics from the New York City Department of Health concluded that about 10 percent of the 3,000 people killed by the fanatical followers of bin Laden were Hispanic, among them Mexicans, Colombians, Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Cubans, Hondurans, Venezuelans, Salvadorans, Argentines and Spaniards.

The Tepeyac Association, a community group based in Manhattan, documented 100 cases of undocumented immigrants who died that day, including cooks, cleaners and other service providers.

It is almost impossible to make it clear to intolerant people that the authors of the Sept. 11 tragedy entered the country with legal visas that were stamped in U.S. consulates abroad, and that among their victims were thousands of Latinos who participated in the clean-up of Ground Zero and experienced trouble breathing as a result of exposure to the toxins.

More than 2,000 of them, 70 percent of them undocumented, sought help at the Tepeyac Association.

That's why it is morally wrong that on the anniversary of Sept. 11 several years ago, Vernon Robinson, the former councilman from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, led a protest against "illegals" in front of the Mexican Consulate in Raleigh. And that former state Senator Fern Shubert, during his unsuccessful campaign for governor in 2004, used footage of the attack on the twin towers when talking about the issue of granting driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.

Now that President Barack Obama has reaffirmed his position, disproved the conspiracy theories about his birthplace, and achieved his goal in eliminating bin Laden, it is time for him to grant justice to the undocumented immigrants who have sacrificed for this country.

For now, in order to begin to fulfill his promises, he could use his executive powers to stop deportations. ♦

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OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Immigrant Community Needs White House Muscle

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inconsistent with the broader vision of immigration and economic prosperity the President outlined in El Paso. But placed in a broader strategic context, the El Paso speech moves the President's strategy for immigration reform forward by utilizing the messages and tools that carried Barack Obama into the White House and helped him win his signature healthcare reforms.

The speech itself moved from the promise of America to the importance of immigration to expectations and responsibilities for each of the affected players. Echoing a theme that he first made public in his State of the Union Address, the President centered immigration firmly within an economic framework, as something that affects the prosperity of everyone in America. Although the speech was given at the border, it was clearly designed to say we are done with making immigration only about border enforcement and we are moving on to immigration as a component of our future.

You have to go beyond the speech to really appreciate this point, however. The blueprint released concurrently with the speech is a far more explicit outline of what the White House supports. It's an outline of legislation with a heavy emphasis on the importance of immigrants as taxpayers and innovators and



Photo: whitehouse.gov

the impact that immigration has on our economy. Consequently, it contains more specific proposals for fixing the broken legal immigration system than we have seen from the White House to date.

The White House also launched an online toolkit to give people around the country a chance to participate in the immigration debate and is sponsoring a host of roundtables and other events to engage the public on the issue.

Yes, this is politics, but the kind that the Obama administration excels in. If it works, more people who support immigration reform will start to look at immi-

gration as an important and necessary element of keeping our economy and our country on track. They will start asking their elected officials why they haven't done anything all these years and why they have turned an economic issue into one that has for far too long been about race and prejudice and fear.

This is a good strategy that can help win the broader legislative goals of comprehensive immigration reform eventually, but it isn't the only front the Administration has to engage in. Like it or not, the President can't avoid dealing

with the fallout of some of the DHS policies that have led to greater deportations and more separations of families than ever before. At the same time the White House tries to convince the general public that immigration reform is necessary, it must put more efforts into using its powers to reform Department of Homeland Security administratively. As a recent report by the Immigration Policy Center points out, while there have been some administrative reforms, the failure to use discretionary authority to help DREAM Act students, end deportations to Haiti, or keep families together by revisiting policies on hardship waivers, makes it hard for many people who have worked tirelessly on this issue for years to really believe the White House is serious.

That's a shame, because the immigration community needs the White House muscle of a big picture legislative game, but the White House needs the immigration community, too. And as heartfelt and moving as the President's recent speeches have been, he won't completely win people over without addressing the problems at DHS. That may be too inside baseball for the general public for whom immigration reform is a good thing, but not yet something that directly touches their lives. But for the millions of people directly affected by the broken immigration system—whose children risk deportation after they graduate from high school, for instance—there has to be even more. ♦

Boudicca is a young medieval princess who wants nothing more than to break tradition and live her life on her own terms. Her plans for life are dashed when she learns that she must marry a man of her parents' choosing for the sake of political stability. It is then that she meets a mysterious young man whom she become enamored with. Will Boudicca follow the wishes of her parents, or will she risk it all for the love of her heart?

To find out, go to www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com to purchase the book.

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Employers Beware: Resumption of Social Security No-Match Letters

BY JOSIE GONZALEZ

After a long hiatus, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has once again started sending the dreaded "no-match" letters that advise employers that their workers are using a social security number that does not coincide with SSA's records. Effective April 6, 2011, pursuant to a directive from the SSA Commissioner, SSA resumed sending employer decentralized correspondence (DECOR) letters for tax year 2010.

All along, SSA has been sending an employee version of the DECOR letter to employees at their home address if the name and/or social security number listed on the employer's submitted W-2s did not match the information in the SSA database. Before 2007, if SSA did not have an accurate address for the employee, SSA sent a different version of the DECOR letter directly to the last employer of record, asking the employer to provide the following information to SSA: the employee's name, social security number, address, and whether or not the employee had ever used another name.

The federal court that heard the challenge to the now rescinded no-match reg-

ulation never prohibited SSA from sending the version of the no-match letter SSA had used since 1994 that did not include a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) insert advising employers that they should follow the guidance in its safe harbor regulations. Nevertheless, in 2007, SSA stopped sending employer DECOR letters.

What Is Different about the New SSA Letter?

The new version of the SSA employer letter omits the ICE insert that cautioned the employer that failure to act upon receipt of the SSA no-match letter could be construed as constructive knowledge of knowingly continuing to employ unauthorized workers, based on the totality of the circumstances.

The DECOR letters are different from the traditional SSA employer no-match letters, EDCOR (Code V) letters, which SSA sent to employers from 1993 to 2005. Those letters listed multiple employee social security numbers and asked employers to provide updated information. The new employer version of the DECOR letter lists only one employee per letter. The new employer DECOR letter cites The Privacy Act and cautions that failure to complete the let-

ter prevents SSA from crediting the employee with the correct wages. It further adds, "We may give this information to the Internal Revenue Service for tax administration purposes or to the Department of Justice for investigating and prosecuting violations of the Social Security Act."

Just like the earlier employer EDCOR letter, the letter advises that there may be many reasons for the no-match letter, such as typographical errors, name changes, and incomplete information. It also states, "The letter does not imply that you or your employee intentionally provided incorrect information about the employee's name or SSN. It is not a basis, in and of itself, for you to take any adverse action against the employee, such as laying off, suspending, firing, or discriminating against the individual."

SSA Field Guidance

In guidance on how to handle inquiries relating to SSA no-match letters, SSA instructs representatives to advise employers to check their records to determine if their information matches the records submitted and to ask the employee to check their records to ensure that they have accurately reported their name and social security number to

the employer. If the employer and the employee are unable to resolve the issue, the employer should instruct the employee to contact a local SSA office and provide the employee with a reasonable amount of time to resolve the discrepancy. According to SSA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), "it takes approximately 10 to 14 days to receive [a] replacement social security card." However, Section 1, Question 5 of the *Frequently Asked Questions about DECOR in the Program Operations Manual System* states, "The ER should give the EE a reasonable amount of time to rectify the situation with us. It may take two months or longer to get a new or replacement Social Security card".

Moreover, the now rescinded DHS regulations gave the employer up to 90 days to resolve the discrepancy and, as discussed below, the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has suggested that 120 days is appropriate.

The field guidance advises that if an employer states that he or she is unable to resolve the mismatch because the employee is unable to provide a social security card, or may no longer work for the employer, the employer should document efforts made to obtain the corrected

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Statutory Numbers

1. This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during June. Consular officers are required to report to the Department of State documentarily qualified applicants for numerically limited visas; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security reports applicants for adjustment of status. Allocations were made, to the extent possible, in chronological order of reported priority dates, for demand received by May 11th. If not all demand could be satisfied, the category or foreign state in which demand was excessive was deemed oversubscribed. The cut-off date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who could not be reached within the numerical limits. Only applicants who have a priority date earlier than the cut-off date may be allotted a number. If it becomes necessary during the monthly allocation process to retrogress a cut-off date, supplemental requests for numbers will be honored only if the priority date falls within the new cut-off date announced in this bulletin.

2. Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) sets an annual minimum family-sponsored preference limit of 226,000. The worldwide level for annual employment-based preference immigrants is at least 140,000. Section 202 prescribes that the per-country limit for preference immigrants is set at 7% of the total annual family-sponsored and employment-based preference limits, i.e., 25,620. The dependent area limit is set at 2%, or 7,320.

3. INA Section 203(e) provides that family-sponsored and employment-based preference visas be issued to eligible immigrants in the order in which a petition in behalf of each has been filed. Section 203(d) provides that spouses and children of preference immigrants are entitled to the same status, and the same order of consideration, if accompanying or following to join the principal. The visa prorating provisions of Section 202(e) apply to allocations for a foreign state or dependent area when visa demand exceeds the per-country limit. These provisions apply at present to the following oversubscribed chargeability areas: CHINA-mainland born, INDIA, MEXICO, and PHILIPPINES.

4. Section 203(a) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Family-sponsored immigrant visas as follows:

FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCES

First (F1): Unmarried Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens: 23,400 plus any numbers not required for fourth preference.

Second: Spouses and Children, and

Unmarried Sons and Daughters of Permanent Residents: 114,200, plus the number (if any) by which the worldwide family preference level exceeds 226,000, plus any unused first preference numbers:

A. (F2A) Spouses and Children of Permanent Residents: 77% of the overall second preference limitation, of which 75% are exempt from the per-country limit;

B. (F2B) Unmarried Sons and Daughters (21 years of age or older) of Permanent Residents: 23% of the overall second preference limitation.

Third (F3): Married Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens: 23,400, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences.

Fourth (F4): Brothers and Sisters of Adult U.S. Citizens: 65,000, plus any numbers not required by first three preferences.

On the chart below, the listing of a date for any class indicates that the class is oversubscribed (see paragraph 1); "C" means current, i.e., numbers are available for all qualified applicants; and "U" means unavailable, i.e., no numbers are available. (NOTE: Numbers are available only for applicants whose priority date is earlier than the cut-off date listed below.)

5. Section 203(b) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Employment-based immigrant visas as follows:

EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCES

First: Priority Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required for fourth and fifth preferences.

Second: Members of the Professions Holding Advanced Degrees or Persons of Exceptional Ability: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required by first preference.

Third: Skilled Workers, Professionals, and Other Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide level, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences, not more than 10,000 of which are "Other Workers".

Fourth: Certain Special Immigrants: 7.1% of the worldwide level.

Fifth: Employment Creation: 7.1% of the worldwide level, not less than 3,000 of which reserved for investors in a targeted rural or high-unemployment area, and 3,000 set aside for investors in regional centers by Sec. 610 of P.L. 102-395.♦

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F2B	15APR03	15APR03	15APR03	22AUG92	08JUN00
F3	01JUN01	01JUN01	01JUN01	15NOV92	08MAR92
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Source: U.S. State Dept

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You have the unique opportunity to immerse your children in different customs and cultures. The good news is you don't have to trot the globe to open their minds and imaginations to the world. Here are some tips to help you get started:

Host an international exchange student

There are few things that can broaden a child's worldview like connecting with a family from another country. Hosting an international high school exchange student goes beyond a brief meeting and forges a lifelong bond, not only with the student but with his or her family. This also is a chance to challenge your kids to learn about, appreciate and share their own culture and traditions. Families interested in hosting a high school exchange student can contact EF Foundation for Foreign Study, the United

States' largest exchange organization, at effoundation.org or (800) 447-4273.

Learn another language as a family

There are a lot of cultural subtleties hidden in foreign languages, and learning to speak one (or more) is a great way to connect with people from around the world. Consider learning a language as a family through a community education course or a local cultural organization — you can even download language instruction podcasts or mp3s from iTunes and other places on the Web.

Sample cuisine from other countries

Take your family out for a meal at a restaurant that serves food from different countries, or consider preparing world cuisine recipes together at home. Make this into a game for your kids. Give each child an opportunity to select a country, and prepare a meal representative of the culture. Whether it's Indian, Mexican, Japanese or German, you can learn a lot about a culture from its food.

Make the most of media

There are endless opportunities to learn about the world, right at your fingertips—from watching an international

news program, to signing up for a foreign pen pal, to downloading international music. Look for movies that are set in other countries and can provide insights into another way of life. Search your TV listings for travel programs or history shows that are valuable learning tools, then watch and discuss them as a family. And of course, the simple, transporting experience of reading books about far-off places will always be a great way to learn more about the world.

Connect with your neighbors

Create a circle of friends who can provide your children with insights on other countries. Think of your neighbors, colleagues, parents of your children's friends — anyone who grew up in, or has lived in, another country who can talk about their experiences with you and your family. Use stories, food, languages and holidays to share your different backgrounds.

Learning about the cultures and people of the world begins at home. Whether you talk to your kids about current world events, host an exchange student, or pique their interest through photos of places overseas, by helping them develop a broad worldview, you're giving them a world of possibilities. ♦ (ARA)

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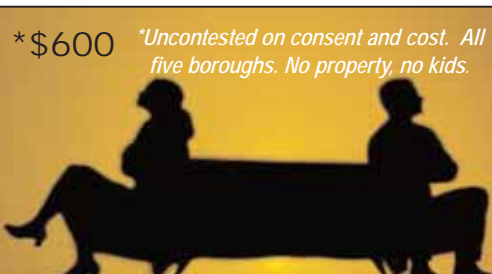
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IMMIGRATION

Sexual Assault Against Immigrant Women

continued from page 1

When 150 immigrant women who have worked in the U.S. food industry were interviewed by the SPLC for the 2010 report, *Injustice on Our Plates*, we found that sexual harassment and even brutal sexual assaults by male co-workers and supervisors were a constant threat for many of the immigrant women employed in this industry. Some of these women, who had worked in various states across the country, saw it as a danger that simply must be tolerated in order to receive a day's pay.

A separate study published in 2010 found that among 150 women of Mexican descent working in the fields in California's Central Valley, 80 percent said they had experienced sexual harassment. That compares to roughly half of all women in the U.S. workforce who say that they have experienced at least one incident.

Co-workers and supervisors preying on these women know they often face obstacles that keep them silent. Sometimes these women don't know their legal rights. Other times, it's their immigration status. And there's always the power of fear and shame.

That's why the SPLC launched a national campaign to raise awareness of the brutality faced by these women.

Throughout April, which was Sexual Assault Awareness Month, my col-

leagues and I had meetings with policy-makers to discuss this issue. We also hosted "Know Your Rights" events across the country to inform immigrant women about their legal rights – giving them the tools to speak out and seek justice.

This effort kicked off in Washington, D.C., where we met with members of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor. We also participated in a panel discussion at the University of California Washington Center.

It's an important step for addressing a human rights tragedy that's been hidden from the view of most Americans. As one immigrant woman told us: "No one sees the people in the field. We're ignored."

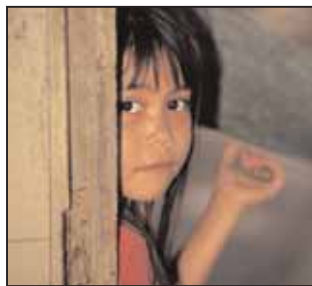
Yet, we benefit from their labor every time we sit down at the dinner table. It's their hands that slice and package the chicken breasts for our meals. It's their long, hot days in the fields that allow us to have fresh tomatoes on our plates. And it's their backs that bend to pick the lettuce in our salads.

It's our responsibility to stop the sexual violence and exploitation that they suffer. ♦

For more information on the Southern Poverty Law Center's national campaign to raise awareness about the sexual exploitation of immigrant women in the food industry, visit www.splcenter.org

Special Immigrant Juvenile Adjudications

continued from page 1



this country without parental support due to abuse, neglect, abandonment or another similar basis. This report issues recommendations regarding adjudications for those who seek Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status.


The SIJ stakeholder experience with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) varies widely from city to city. In some locations, stakeholders express appreciation for accessible and knowledgeable SIJ experts at USCIS. There is a sense that leaders in these field offices "get it" when it comes to the sense of urgency and the difficult reality that these children are facing. At the same time, other stakeholders share concerns about a void in access to local contacts who specialize in SIJ adjudications and interviews, as well as a lack of training and guidance to support effi-

cient and appropriate adjudications. Individuals and organizations seeking to assist SIJ applicants also express concern about a lack of revised guidance reflective of the most current advancements in law.

For USCIS, there is an opportunity to identify leadership teams that have implemented the best practices and to encourage the adoption of these practices throughout the nation. Furthermore, training and up-to-date guidance to support adjudicators in this work represent important steps to achieve timely and consistently sound decisions. In this way, USCIS can benefit from building the best practices into SIJ adjudication processes nationwide, and the public can benefit from uniformly sound treatment and decisions no matter which field office they rely on for services. ♦

January Contreras is the Ombudsman for Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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Another Study Highlights Need for Legal Representation in Immigration Court

BY BETH WERLIN

Findings released recently by the New York Immigration Representation Study reveal what immigration advocates long have said: whether a person has legal representation is a critical factor in obtaining a favorable result in immigration court. The findings—which are based on a study of individuals apprehended in New York from October 2005 through December 2010—show that amongst noncitizens who are not in detention, 74 percent of those with lawyers obtained favorable outcomes, versus only 13 percent of those without lawyers. Amongst noncitizens in detention, 18 percent of those represented by attorneys obtained favorable outcomes in immigration court, versus only 3 percent of those who lacked representation.

The government's own statistics mirror this finding. The Government Accountability Office found that asylum applicants who had lawyers were more than three times as likely to be granted asylum as those who did not. Similarly, a comprehensive study of asylum outcomes by academics concluded that whether an asylum seeker was represented



in court was “the single most important factor” affecting the outcome of the case.

Despite the importance of counsel, a staggering number of individuals in removal proceedings are forced to proceed without legal representation. The New York Representation Study found that 60 percent of detained noncitizens and 27 percent of non-detained noncitizens do not have lawyers. Nationally, the statistics are even worse. In FY 2010, 57 percent of all noncitizens in proceeding (both detained and non-detained) did not

have lawyers. That means that last year, 164,742 noncitizens faced the daunting and often insurmountable task of navigating a complicated maze of procedural rules, statutes, regulations, and court decisions.

Not surprisingly, cost often is a barrier to representation, especially for detained noncitizens. As the study indicates, the vast majority (92 percent) of representation in New York is provided by private attorneys. However, cost is not the only impediment. Almost two-thirds of noncitizens arrested by ICE in New York

are transferred to far-away detention facilities, most frequently, in Texas, Louisiana and Pennsylvania. Transfers make it more difficult to retain a lawyer, particularly when it means moving to a remote location where there are few lawyers and even fewer pro bono resources. They also may disrupt existing attorney-client relationships. As a result, the study found that 79 percent of individuals transferred to detention facilities outside New York are unrepresented.

Given the gravity of removal—which can range from permanent separation from family in the U.S. to being returned to a country where a person fears for his life—indigent noncitizens should be appointed counsel. Appointed counsel would not only help protect the rights of noncitizens and ensure just outcomes in removal cases, but also would make removal proceedings more efficient. Because non-attorneys generally are unfamiliar with the complex laws and rules governing immigration court hearings, immigration judges must spend precious time getting them up to speed. Lawyers can help streamline the process. ♦

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DHS Extends TPS to Haitians

Washington, D.C.: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) took an important step on behalf of Haitians affected by last year's devastating earthquake, demonstrating the humanitarian side of its immigration responsibilities. Secretary Janet Napolitano announced that DHS would extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for an additional eighteen months for Haitians currently residing in the United States. She also announced that she would permit Haitians who arrived up to one year after the earthquake, many of whom came in on visitor visas and other authorized measures, to apply for TPS. The following is a statement from Mary Giovagnoli, Director of the Immigration Policy Center.

"We applaud DHS's decision both to extend the timing of TPS and to broaden the scope of people who qualify for it. In the chaotic days following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the men and women of DHS worked hard to provide relief to survivors, admitting many people temporarily to save them from devastation, disease, and starvation. While DHS quickly designated TPS status for those Haitians residing in the U.S. at the time of the earthquake, many others who came to the U.S. within days or weeks of



An image from the 2010 earthquake

the disaster were ineligible for TPS, but were also unable to return home. This announcement addresses these problems and recognizes the extraordinary need for a compassionate and humane response to the devastation in Haiti.

The decision by the Secretary is evidence of the power of the Executive branch to shape the implementation of existing immigration law. Secretary Napolitano could have declined to extend TPS or make more people eligible, because the law did not require her to do so. But because she had the discretion to revisit the original determination, and ultimately used it to expand the range of people eligible for this protection, the U.S. will be able to help thou-

sands of people who might otherwise have faced deportation to Haiti and enormous suffering. However, DHS will continue to deport some Haitians back to Haiti. We urge DHS to continue to exercise discretion with respect to Haitians still facing deportation and others adversely affected by harsh immigration policies who are eligible for immigration relief."

FOR FREE TPS PROCESSING ASSISTANCE AND FREE CONSULTATIONS, call the Immigrant's Journal Legal & Educational Fund, Inc., a 501(c)(3) approved organization and the Law Office of Figeroux & Associates at 718-363-7788.

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LEGAL ISSUES

Employers Beware: Resumption of Social Security No-Match Letters

continued from page 5

information and retain the documentation for four years.

While this advice may be adequate for employees no longer employed, one questions whether the mere documentation of the employee's inability to correct its records will satisfy ICE I-9 auditors who now routinely request copies of all correspondence in its audits.

In the context of erroneous withholdings, a W-2C (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement) along with a W-3C (Transmittal of Corrected Wage and Tax Statements) is normally required to correct a social security number error. In some cases, the 940 annual FUTA return, state income tax and state unemployment returns, and local tax returns may require amending. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may impose a fine of \$100 per information return for failure to file corrections.

Guidance from the Office of Special Counsel

With the advice of counsel, employers must establish effective strategies to address employer DECOR letters in a lawful yet non-discriminatory manner.

The OSC recently provided general guidelines for employers to follow in

developing a response plan to SSA no-match letters. This guidance states that an employer should not terminate a worker based only on the receipt of a no-match letter, nor should it attempt to re-verify work authorization by requesting completion of a new I-9 form.

According to OSC, the employer should provide a "reasonable period of time" for the worker to resolve the problem.

According to OSC FAQs, "There are no Federal statutes or regulations in effect that define a 'reasonable period of time' in connection with the resolution of a no-match notice. As a practical matter, a 'reasonable period of time' depends on the totality of the circumstances. Of note, in the E-Verify context, SSA has the ability to put a tentative non-confirmation into continuance for up to 120 days. This recognizes that it can sometimes take that long to resolve a discrepancy in SSA's database."

ICE's Rescinded Guidance

As stated earlier, ICE rescinded its guidance to employers set forth in the "Safe Harbor Procedures for Employers Who Receive a No-Match Letter." The rescinded regulations described a procedure whereby an employer could establish that it responded reasonably to a no-match letter and take advantage of a "safe harbor" if it reviewed its records, communicated with the worker named in

the no-match letter, and resolved the discrepancy within 90 days, including an option to complete a new I-9 with updated work authorization documents.

Interestingly, in the preamble to the rescission regulation, ICE stated that SSA no-match letters have formed the basis for multiple criminal investigations by ICE and prosecutions on charges of harboring or knowingly hiring unauthorized aliens.

Conclusion

Well, is everything now crystal clear regarding an employer's obligation when it receives the newly minted employment version of the SSA's DECOR no-match letter? Key governmental entities—ICE, SSA, and OSC—seem to be in agreement that the mere receipt of a no-match letter is not evidence that the employee is using fraudulent documents and is not authorized to work. They are also in agreement that an employer should not take adverse action against the employee merely based on the letter. Further, they agree that an employer should give the employee reasonable time to resolve the discrepancy; but is "reasonable time" two weeks, two months, three months or four months?

In the current environment of aggressive ICE enforcement against employers, the laissez faire approach to receipt of this notice is not advisable. If these notices were really inconsequential, why

do ICE I-9 auditors demand the surrender of it in their investigative efforts? Why do the majority of criminal prosecutions against employers involve social security no-match letters? Clearly, an employer's conduct, or lack thereof, upon receipt of a no-match letter can lead to trouble.

Examples of conduct that have triggered criminal prosecutions include the employer telling the worker to get a new social security card that is either equally fraudulent or is legitimate but belongs to another person, and paying the employee in cash in order to avoid use of the social security number listed in the DECOR letter. Unquestionably, employers that receive the new DECOR employer no-match letter should work with counsel to develop strategies to effectively balance their obligations to follow up while treating their employees in a manner that does not run afoul of the anti-discrimination laws. ♦

Source: AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 11041231.

Josie Gonzalez is the Chair, Verification & Documentation Liaison Committee, Grant Sovern, Marketa Lindt and Kathleen Walker.

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President Barack Obama with community leaders: left, Gerry Hopkins and far right, Brian Figeroux, at an exclusive meeting where the Mighty Sparrow (second left) presented a CD with a song "Barack the Magnificent" written especially for the President.

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How to Help a Loved One Living with Diabetes

You may have heard that diabetes runs in families. But diabetes doesn't have to run a family's life, as long as the person with the disease is surrounded by knowledgeable friends and family members ready to assist their loved one in managing the disease.

Too often, diabetes is thought of as a senior's disease. In reality, only 10.9 million of the nearly 26 million Americans whom the American Diabetes Association (ADA) says have diabetes are older than 65; 14.9 million develop type 1 or type 2 diabetes before their 60th birthdays. The ADA also estimates that 79 million more people are "pre-diabetic," so being informed about what you can do to help, in an emergency or as someone dear to you struggles to manage the chronic disease, is increasingly important.

Diabetes comes in two forms: type 2, which is slow onset, and type 1, which usually develops in childhood or adolescence and is most commonly diagnosed between the ages of 5 and 18.

"Type 1 and type 2 diabetes pose some basic similarities in terms of pathophysiology and treatment; however, they are basically viewed as different diseases by clinicians," says John Burns, III, program director for South University's physician assistant program. "But with either diagnosis, support from family and friends is critical in helping the patient adjust to the prescribed treatment, and knowledgeable family members and friends could mean

the difference between life and death."

With children and adolescents, parents are initially very involved in managing the disease, which may include daily injections of insulin or an insulin pump, home glucose monitoring, and changes in family dietary patterns. The challenge for the parents and children is that they also must facilitate transition of care at some point in time, so the patient becomes an adult who has the skills to manage this lifelong disease.

"Finding a medical provider that uses a team-oriented approach is important," says Burns. "This should include doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners trained in endocrinology, dietitians, diabetes nurse specialists and mental health professionals."

When an adult is diagnosed with diabetes the challenges are most often concerned with changing long-established habits around eating and exercising, and developing new habits for testing and managing blood sugar levels. These new habits affect daily life, and the support of family members and friends is significant in making these changes successful for the long term.

"Managing diabetes in an adult is more complicated than simply eating less sugar and exercising more," says Burns. "Adults have preferences and habits that over the years have become closely tied to their self image and their social network. For example, national holidays and family cel-

ebrations almost always include traditional meals and snacks. Facing those events without enjoying the same traditions can cause angst and, if not addressed, could lead to frustration."

What can you do? Instead of focusing on what the patient should no longer eat (or eat significantly less of), be sure to include a wide variety of food choices and think about adding new traditions with new recipes.

What About Emergencies?

Knowing what to do in an emergency situation is critical for family and friends of a diabetic person. Too much insulin in the body could result in insulin shock and too much sugar in the body could result in diabetic coma.

A diabetic emergency can be the result of too much or too little sugar in the blood.

Signs of too much sugar and not enough insulin (hyperglycemia) include:

- * Hunger
- * Excessive thirst
- * Visual blurring
- * Fruity breath odor
- * Heavy and fast breathing
- * Flushed skin
- * Drowsiness

Signs someone is experiencing too little sugar and too much insulin (hypoglycemia) include:

- * Fast breathing
- * Fast pulse
- * Dizziness
- * Weakness
- * Sweating
- * Headache
- * Numbness in limbs
- * Confusion/difficulty concentrating

If a friend or family member experiences a diabetic emergency, you should take the following three steps:

1. Ask: "Have you eaten today?"
2. Ask: "Have you taken your medication today?"

If the patient has eaten but not taken prescribed medication, he or she may be hyperglycemic and in danger of diabetic coma.

- * If he or she has not eaten but did take prescribed medication, he or she may be having an insulin reaction.
- * If you suspect an insulin reaction and he or she is conscious, give the person sugar, such as juice or a piece of hard candy.
- * If you suspect hyperglycemia ask, "Where is your medication?"

3. Call 911 for help if the person is not responding to any of your questions. ♦
-(ARA)

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IMMIGRANTS' CONCERNS

Dealing With Debt

Debt is defined as an amount owed to a person or organization for funds borrowed. Debt can be represented by a loan note, bond, mortgage or other form stating repayment terms and, if applicable, interest requirements. These different forms all imply intent to pay back an amount owed by a specific date, which is set forth in the repayment terms.

In today's challenging economic times 7 out of 10 people have debts, outstanding debts to be exact. If you are behind in paying your bills, you can expect to hear from a debt collector. A debt collector is someone, other than the creditor, who regularly collects debts owed to someone else. Lawyers who collect debts on a regular basis are considered debt collectors, too.

Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to help you as you endeavor to clear your debts.

Debt Relief Services

If you've maxed out your credit cards and don't know how you're going to pay off your debts, you may think that a company that promises to erase the debt for pennies on the dollar is the answer to your prayers. Not true! Debt negotiation can be risky, and it can have serious, long-term consequences for your credit report and your ability to get credit in the future.



In today's challenging economic times 7 out of 10 people have debts, outstanding debts to be exact.

Credit Repair

Everyday, companies target people who have poor credit histories with promises to clean up their credit reports so they can get a car loan, a home mortgage, insurance, or even a job – after paying a fee for the service. The truth is that no one can remove accurate negative information from your credit report. It's illegal.

Advance Fee Loans

If you're looking for a loan or credit card but don't think you'll qualify—or if you've been turned down by a bank because of your credit history—you may be tempted by ads and websites that guarantee loans or credit cards, regardless of your credit history. Should you apply, you'll likely find out that you have

to pay a fee just for the promise of the loan. Best to ignore these ads or sites.

If you have to pay a fee for the promise of a loan or credit card, you're dealing with a scam artist. More than likely, you'll get just an application for a credit card, a stored value or debit card, or a card that has so many strings attached, it's practically worthless.

Vehicle Repossession

If you're like most people, you rely on your vehicle to get you where you need to go—and when you need to go—whether it's to work, school, the grocery store, or the soccer field. But if you're late with your car payments, or in some states, if you don't have adequate auto insurance, your vehicle could be taken away from you. ♦

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Documents Required

- * List of debts
- * Your most recent tax returns
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OUR LEADERS

Malcolm X: Leader Extraordinaire

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. His mother, Louise Norton Little, was a homemaker occupied with the family's eight children. His father, Earl Little, was an outspoken Baptist minister and avid supporter of Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey. Earl's civil rights activism prompted death threats from the white supremacist organization Black Legion, forcing the family to relocate twice before Malcolm's fourth birthday.

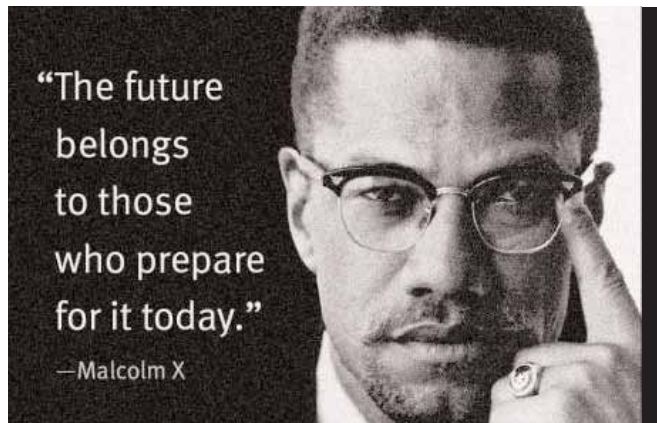
Malcolm was a smart, focused student. He graduated from junior high at the top of his class. However, when a favorite teacher told Malcolm his dream of becoming a lawyer was "no realistic goal for a nigger," Malcolm lost interest in school. He dropped out, spent some time in Boston, Massachusetts working various odd jobs, and then traveled to Harlem, New York where he committed petty crimes. By 1942 Malcolm was coordinating various narcotics, prostitution and gambling rings.

Eventually Malcolm and his buddy, Malcolm "Shorty" Jarvis, moved back to Boston. In 1946 they were arrested and convicted on burglary charges, and Malcolm was sentenced to 10 years in prison. (He was paroled after serving seven years.) Recalling his days in school, he used the time to further his education. It was during this period of self-enlightenment that Malcolm's brother Reginald would visit and discuss his recent conversion to the Muslim religion. Reginald belonged to the religious organization, the Nation of Islam (NOI).

Intrigued, Malcolm began to study the teachings of NOI leader Elijah Muhammad. Muhammad taught that white society actively worked to keep African-Americans from empowering themselves and achieving political, economic and social success. Among other goals, the NOI fought for a state of their own, separate from one inhabited by white people. By the time he was paroled in 1952, Malcolm was a devoted follower with the new surname "X." (He considered "Little" a slave name and chose the "X" to signify his lost tribal name.)

A Born Leader

Intelligent and articulate, Malcolm was appointed as a minister and national spokesman for the Nation of Islam. Elijah



Muhammad also charged him with establishing new mosques in cities such as Detroit, Michigan and Harlem, New York. Malcolm utilized newspaper columns, as well as radio and television to communicate the NOI's message across the United States. His charisma, drive and conviction attracted an astounding number of new members. Malcolm was largely credited with increasing membership in the NOI from 500 in 1952 to 30,000 in 1963.

The crowds and controversy surrounding Malcolm made him a media magnet. He was featured in a week-long television special with Mike Wallace in 1959, called "The Hate That Hate Produced." The program explored the fundamentals of the NOI, and tracked Malcolm's emergence as one of its most important leaders. After the special, Malcolm was faced with the uncomfortable reality that his fame had eclipsed that of his mentor Elijah Muhammad.

Racial tensions ran increasingly high during the early 1960s. In addition to the media, Malcolm's vivid personality had captured the government's attention. As membership in the NOI continued to grow, FBI agents infiltrated the organization (one even acted as Malcolm's bodyguard) and secretly placed bugs, wiretaps, cameras and other surveillance equipment to monitor the group's activities.

A Test of Faith

Malcolm's faith was dealt a crushing blow at the height of the civil rights movement in 1963. He learned that his mentor and leader, Elijah Muhammad, was secretly having relations with as many as six

women within the Nation of Islam organization. As if that were not enough, Malcolm found out that some of these relationships had resulted in children.

Since joining the NOI, Malcolm had strictly adhered to the teachings of Muhammad—which included remaining celibate until his marriage to Betty Shabazz in 1958. Malcolm refused Muhammad's request to help cover up the affairs and subsequent children. He was deeply hurt by the deception of Muhammad, whom he had considered a living prophet. Malcolm also felt guilty about the masses he had led to join the NOI, which he now felt was a fraudulent organization built on too many lies to ignore.

Shortly after his shocking discovery, Malcolm received criticism for a comment he made regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. "[Kennedy] never foresaw that the chickens would come home to roost so soon," said Malcolm. After the statement, Elijah Muhammad "silenced" Malcolm for 90 days. Malcolm, however, suspected he was silenced for another reason. In March 1964 Malcolm terminated his relationship with the NOI. Unable to look past Muhammad's deception, Malcolm decided to found his own religious organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc.

A New Awakening

That same year, Malcolm went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The trip proved life altering. For the first time, Malcolm shared his thoughts and beliefs with different cultures, and found the

response to be overwhelmingly positive. When he returned, Malcolm said he had met "blonde-haired, blue-eyed men I could call my brothers." He returned to the United States with a new outlook on integration and a new hope for the future. This time when Malcolm spoke, instead of just preaching to African-Americans, he had a message for all races.

After Malcolm resigned his position in the Nation of Islam and renounced Elijah Muhammad, relations between the two had become increasingly volatile. FBI informants working undercover in the NOI warned officials that Malcolm had been marked for assassination. (One undercover officer had even been ordered to help plant a bomb in Malcolm's car).

After repeated attempts on his life, Malcolm rarely traveled anywhere without bodyguards. On February 14, 1965 the home where Malcolm, Betty and their four daughters lived in East Elmhurst, New York was firebombed. Luckily, the family escaped physical injury.

The Legacy of "X"

One week later, however, Malcolm's enemies were successful in their ruthless attempt. At a speaking engagement in Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom on February 21, 1965 three gunmen rushed Malcolm onstage. They shot him 15 times at close range. The 39-year-old was pronounced dead on arrival at New York's Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

Fifteen hundred people attended Malcolm's funeral in Harlem on February 27, 1965 at the Faith Temple Church of God in Christ (now Child's Memorial Temple Church of God in Christ). After the ceremony, friends took the shovels away from the waiting gravediggers and buried Malcolm themselves.

Later that year, Betty gave birth to their twin daughters.

Malcolm's assassins, Talmadge Hayer, Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson were convicted of first-degree murder in March 1966. The three men were all members of the Nation of Islam.

The legacy of Malcolm X has moved through generations as the subject of numerous documentaries, books and movies.

Malcolm X is buried at the Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York. ♠

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BUSINESS & FINANCIAL ISSUES

Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Creating More Jobs for Americans

BY ANNE O' CALLAGHAN
NEW AMERICA MEDIA

Amidst the highly charged debates on immigration and our economy, a remarkable fact often goes unmentioned: Many Americans owe their jobs to immigrant entrepreneurs.

It isn't just big tech companies like Google or Sun Microsystems. Here in Philadelphia, companies such as Al-Ameen Imports and Vitacare Home Health are prime examples. Both companies' founders came from other countries to launch businesses in the U.S.—and they're both employing American-born staff.

That might sound surprising, but here at the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, we've been documenting the economic contributions of immigrants for a long time. Our corridor studies show that 60 to 70 percent of the businesses in many shopping districts are owned by newcomers. Indeed, from retail shops to business services, immigrants are vital elements of our country's economic resilience.

These energetic business people create ripple effects that stretch far beyond their own families and households. Their new hires are helping to drive economic growth as the United States battles the highest unemployment rates in a generation, with

young men and people of color often struggling the hardest to gain a foothold in the job market.

While the popular image of immigrant-owned businesses is still often a mom-and-pop storefront, such small-scale operations are only one part of the picture. For another, consider Zikria Syed, who came from Pakistan to earn a master's degree at Drexel University.

Today he's the founder of the NextDocs, a document-management company based in suburban Philadelphia and serving the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries. Founded in 2006, NextDocs was recently named one of Inc. Magazine's 500 fastest-growing privately held companies in the U.S., with annual revenues of \$6 million. Most significantly, it employs a staff of 50.

Or take Marina Poltavsky. A Ukrainian immigrant, she launched Vitacare Home Health in 2003 from a small office in the Philadelphia suburb of Feasterville. To date, Vitacare has employed more than 150 U.S.-born workers.

These are just two examples of a longstanding American phenomenon: Ambitious newcomers who struck out on their own, and built businesses that drew on local talent to create a shared prosperity.

As Harvard's Vivek Wadhwa has shown, immigrants are not only more likely to start

businesses, but their companies often spark remarkable job creation. Wadhwa's pioneering study of high-tech startups found that 25 percent of tech companies founded in a 10-year period had an immigrant founder. Those companies generated nearly 450,000 jobs and \$52 billion in sales in one year alone.

Yet in the noisy debate about immigration and the American economy, the positive ripple effects of immigrant-owned businesses are often overlooked. Such ignorance is costly to us as a society, especially when contrasted with a more active policy of supporting the integration of immigrant entrepreneurs in our economy while ensuring that native-born Americans are not left behind.

After all, immigrant business owners wouldn't be able to thrive without the growing conditions they find in the United States—affordable space, access to capital, a ready pool of customers, and yes, American-born workers. Acknowledging these realities helps combat the ugly arguments that wrongly portray immigrant success as a zero-sum victory in which U.S.-born citizens are somehow losing out.

As an economic development organization, the Welcoming Center is keenly aware that businesses cannot survive without solid connections to the communities in

which they are located. We recognize that true long-term economic vitality depends on shared prosperity among newcomers and longtime residents alike.

And so our small-business services are open equally to all entrepreneurs, whether they hail from around the corner or the other side of the world. Our English for Entrepreneurs classes help to improve customer service and reduce misunderstandings between owners of small retail stores and their customers. And, our Opportunity Calls monthly announcements inform local business owners of upcoming events in five language—including English.

These are small efforts, but important ones. More than that, they are purposeful: We know that for every success story there are many more talented and passionate entrepreneurs striving to launch their dreams. Harnessing their energy will be vital in boosting all of our communities out of recession and back to prosperity. ♦

Anne O'Callaghan is the founding president and CEO of the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, a nonprofit economic development organization based in Philadelphia. She immigrated to the U.S. in 1970.



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