



THOMAS J. VILSACK
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SALLY J. PEDERSON
LT. GOVERNOR

December 20, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Bush:

As I outlined in my letter to Secretary Chertoff yesterday, I have serious concerns about the way in which the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) handled the recent raids across the Midwest and the subsequent fallout. By some accounts, nearly 1300 individuals were taken into custody, including as many as ninety from Iowa. To this day, the whereabouts of some of these people are still unknown. Considering the hardship this has on their families, silence as their condition is unacceptable.

It is imperative that you respond to the public inquiries regarding family members and loved ones currently being held by ICE officials. I also urge you to disclose to local community and faith-based leaders in the affected states the identities and locations of the individuals so officials can better address the needs of family members left behind. Further, given that some of the people originally taken into custody have been released, federal authorities, at a minimum, should provide enough information so that those who may have been wrongly detained receive the assistance they need to prove their legal status.

Mr. President, I am aware of your call for immigration reform in this morning's new conference. Such changes, however, will come too late for the families with children who are searching for their parents today.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

CC: Secretary Michael Chertoff, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security
Matthew Whitaker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa

