

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: Remarks on restoring enforcement of American immigration laws

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 28, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: [Nicole Tieman](#), [202-225-5101](tel:202-225-5101)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner delivered the following remarks during the Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee hearing on “Restoring Enforcement of Our Nation’s Immigration Laws.”

Watch Congressman Sensenbrenner’s remarks [here](#).

See full transcript below:

It is fitting that today’s hearing is called “Restoring Enforcement of Our Nation’s Immigration Laws.” The past eight years witnessed the Obama administration’s deliberate undermining of our immigration laws, the growth of anti-immigration enforcement policies at every level of government, and the vilification of federal, state and local law enforcement officers who attempt to enforce our nation’s duly enacted immigration laws.

Our immigration laws are an expression of our nation’s sovereignty. They are not suggestions. Yet, for the past eight years, they were largely ignored. And the example was set from the top. The Obama administration abandoned the rule of law under the guise of prosecutorial discretion has had devastating consequences: the cold-blooded murder of Kate Steinle, the death by DUI of Sarah Root, terrorist attacks ranging from the World Trade Center to the massacre in San Bernardino, the brutal sexual assault against a Rockville teenager. The time is long overdue to ensure that our immigration laws are enforced and that the rule of law is truly

restored.

The Obama administration's policies of "catch and release" and of rubberstamping credible fear claims at the border, and its outright prohibition on ICE officers and prosecutors from carrying out ICE's critical mission, have left this nation increasingly at risk. As sky-high credible fear and asylum grant rates encouraged aliens to make the dangerous illicit journey to the United States, aliens overran our border and credible fear and asylum claims increased ten-fold. Simultaneously, ICE removals from the interior dropped from 238,000 in 2009 to only 65,000 in 2016.

The Trump administration inherited a shell of immigration enforcement that it must now rebuild. I'm pleased we will hear today from witnesses who can fully explain the benefits of federal, state and local cooperation and the detrimental effects of obstruction. These sanctuary communities have decided to make a political statement out of lawlessness.

The Declined Detainer Outcome Report that ICE will now regularly issue will prove itself a useful tool in continually identifying these jurisdictions and the criminals they let out onto our streets. The government must discourage, not encourage, sanctuary policies and practices.

Under DHS's November 2014 departmental guidance, ICE was given stringent parameters regarding those removable aliens it was permitted to apprehend and seek to remove. Additional guidance ending the successful Secure Communities program further constricted these parameters. This was sold to the American people as prioritizing ICE's limited resources to go after only "the worst of the worst" - yet the number of criminal aliens removed from the interior fell from almost 87,000 in fiscal year 2014 to approximately 63,500 the following two fiscal years.

Under President Obama, it was widely understood that asylum officers should get to "yes" on credible fear determinations and requests for asylum — by any means necessary. Asylum laws were written to offer refuge to the truly persecuted, and policies like this did nothing to advance those goals. Instead, those Obama administration policies worked to encourage many aliens to seek asylum with fraudulent boilerplate stories. The new administration is taking steps to correct this, and already, the flow of illegal aliens across the border has significantly slowed. This problem is endemic and I look forward to hearing today from our witnesses on best practices to address asylum fraud.