

Statement of Senator Charles E. Grassley

“Examining the Constitutionality and Prudence of State and Local Governments Enforcing Immigration Law”

Senate Judiciary Committee

Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security

April 24, 2012

When I go home to Iowa, I often get questions about why Congress seems disconnected from the concerns of average Americans. I’m asked why we waste so much time on irrelevant subjects instead of working in a bipartisan manner to solve today’s problems. Unfortunately, today’s hearing only raises more questions about why we’re spending time, money and energy on an issue that will be decided by the Supreme Court.

Despite the title of today’s hearing, the witnesses called by the Majority will focus on the immigration law passed by Arizona. Arizona took responsibility when they saw first-hand the results of ineffective leadership from Washington. The federal government hadn’t done its part to protect the border or to enforce the immigration laws on the books. In response, elected leaders in Arizona took action to protect their state and their citizens.

Other states like Arizona have taken on the burden of protecting their citizens in large part because this administration has failed to do so. This administration has sent a message through its policies that the rule of law is just a phrase to be kicked around and not to be taken seriously. Its policies have led the

American people to believe that the laws on the books mean very little.

Unfortunately, there are people suffering because of this administration's inaction and amnesty-minded policies.

Dennis McCann of Chicago was hit and killed by a drunk driving illegal immigrant who was released by Cook County, a local jurisdiction that refuses to cooperate with the federal government on immigration matters. That illegal immigrant defied his order to appear in court, and could very well be drinking and behind the wheel of another car somewhere in the United States. Cook County also released an illegal immigrant who is an alleged child rapist. The illegal immigrant absconded, is nowhere to be found, and could very well be preying on innocent children in other parts of the country.

Other jurisdictions, like New York City, Santa Clara County and San Francisco County, are also defying federal law and posing a serious problem for immigration enforcement officers who aim to do their job of protecting the homeland.

It's unfortunate that today's hearing does not also focus on these jurisdictions, the problems they are creating for our homeland security efforts and the untold number of victims that have had to suffer because of their refusal to help enforce the immigration law.

It's also unfortunate that the Obama administration has done very little to rectify the situation in these jurisdictions. It's disappointing that it has decided to turn a blind eye to sanctuary city policies, and continue to implement policies that reward individuals who are in this country illegally. Finally, it's regrettable that the majority party has chosen to use this time to discuss and influence a case that only the Supreme Court will decide.

It's time for Congress to focus on strengthening our border security, boosting employment verification procedures, and enhancing existing legal avenues for people who want to live, study, and work in this country. It's time for real reform, not another dog and pony show.