

[Stop the Raids](#)

Calitics

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Body

Feb. 26, 2009 ([Calitics](#) delivered by Newstex) --

Up in Bellingham, Washington, a town just a few miles from the Canadian border, Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted a "**raid**" on an engine plant, arresting 28 workers. The **raid** stirred outrage among many progressives who had hoped that the secret police tactics of the Bush-era ICE (and I'm sorry, but that's really the best way to describe it) would end with the new administration.

These "**raids**", several of which have hit California communities, making temporary orphans of children whose parents go to work and are thrown into prison camps with no warning or provision made for care of the children (or in cases in Texas, the children themselves are thrown into the camps), have been a prime target of immigrant rights and human rights groups.

These groups point out that immigration law can be enforced without destroying communities or violating basic rights. They also note that [the raids rarely catch criminals](#). A New York Spanish-language paper, El Diario La Prensa, [called the raids](#) "a runaway program that has ruthlessly persecuted undocumented families" and demanded Obama and Napolitano **stop** them.

The outrage at these **raids** reached DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, who [claimed she did not know about the raids](#) and would investigate them:

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano told lawmakers during a Wednesday hearing in Washington, D.C., that she did not know about the **raid** before it happened.

She has asked ICE for answers.

"In my view," she said, "we have to do workplace enforcement, and it needs to be focused on employers who intentionally and knowingly exploit the illegal labor market. I want to get to the bottom of this as well."

Some Latino bloggers are not sure they buy the [Sgt Schulz defense](#):

The original Know Nothings were a nativist party in the 1800's. Call me cynical, pero I have a hard time buying that the new Secretary of of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, didn't know anything about the ICE **raid** yesterday that arrested 28 undocumented workers....

As ICE **raids** continue while the Obama administration keeps telling us via Spanish language media that they care about immigration, is this administration going to be the new Know Nothings?

Stop the Raids

It's good for immigrant rights activists to keep up the pressure on the Obama Administration. Whether the problem is Bush-era holdovers or an administration not yet willing to break with a policy that violated the human rights of thousands on a massive scale, these **raids** must **stop**.

Also, AG Eric Holder is [promising to end the raids](#) on medical marijuana clubs. This is a big victory for California and might signal a shift in Obama's approach to the failed war on drugs, although it's worth noting this is a small step forward. Let's hope that Napolitano and Holder are both serious about ending these **raids**.

UPDATE: "These **raids** are not a long-term solution" says the White House. A good start, but I'd cut out the words "long-term" - the **raids** don't solve a damn thing.

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