

## **CITY CAME TOGETHER TO HELP NEW N.Y.ERS**

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### **Body**

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Not in our **city**.

That's what **New** Yorkers, from Mayor Bloomberg down to everyday hardworking people, have said to those intent on dehumanizing and persecuting immigrants.

"Our lifeblood is a constant stream of **new** immigrants to improve our cuisine, our culture, our language and, mainly, our economy," Bloomberg said this week. Hizzoner has promised to throw his weight behind immigration reform during his third term.

Our **city** said no to 287(g), an unfair and poorly managed program that makes surrogate immigration agents of local authorities. **New** York, the quintessential **city** of immigrants, has nothing to do with the federal program, and continues to remain one of the safest places in the country for decent immigrant families.

Launched eight years ago, the program is now operational in 72 U.S. jurisdictions with disastrous results. It is supposed to target undocumented immigrants who are dangerous criminals. But the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan Washington-based think tank, found that - despite repeated assurances to the contrary by President Obama and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano - "the program is not targeted primarily or even mostly toward serious offenders."

Actually, the group found half of the program's deportation efforts involve noncitizens - not only undocumented immigrants, but also deportable legal immigrants - whose run-ins with the law have been as petty as traffic offenses.

"Our study highlights the absence of a clear and comprehensive interior immigration strategy," said Randy Capps, the group's Senior Policy Analyst and report co-author.

Such ambiguity is bound to become a huge problem for President Obama's reelection bid, in which Latinos will inevitably play a prominent role. After all, their vote has the potential to swing key states such as Florida, California, Nevada, **New** Mexico and Colorado.

For Latinos, immigration is a personal matter.

A 2009 poll cited by America's Voice, an immigration reform group, showed that 62% of Latino voters know someone who is undocumented. Also, America's Voice says, millions of Latino U.S. citizens once were

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undocumented immigrants and know first-hand about the painful and unfair current anti-immigration climate. It's as climate in which bigotry and blatant racism have become valid political postures.

"It will be more difficult to motivate Latino voters to go to the polls in 2012 when they have seen loved ones deported for driving without a taillight, and families in their extended network ripped apart by an administration that promised improvements," America's Voice concludes.

And, we add, as it should be.

The gap between what the Obama administration says and what it does, between rhetoric and reality on immigration enforcement, has taken on almost scandalous proportions.

Despite Obama's promises, nearly 400,000 immigrants - the highest numbers in the country's history - were deported in each of the last two years. That fact certainly will not help him gain the trust of immigrant voters - especially because the MPI study confirms, hundreds of thousands of them had not committed any crimes.

Yet New Yorkers can be proud that, true to its immigrant tradition, the city has said no to the repressive and counterproductive 287(g).

Not in our city.

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