



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ILRC Statement on President's Joint Address to Congress**

Last night, the president addressed a joint session of Congress for the first time. During his remarks, the president made a call for immigration reform that seemed wildly out of step with the ramped up deportation actions he has authorized over the past month.

Angie Junck, Supervising Attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, issued the following statement:

"Our values as a country are informed not just by what we say, but by how we act. Over the last month, we have stood in solidarity with immigrant families who have been torn apart by raids, refugees who have been denied sanctuary from violence, and Muslim and Jewish community members who have been persecuted solely on the basis of their faith. The actions of the president and his administration, and the resulting pain inflicted on individuals and families from coast to coast, speak clearly to an un-American agenda of hate and discrimination that the words of one speech will not so easily erase, and that we as advocates will not so easily forget."

"We must equally condemn all acts of violence, no matter the skin color of the victim. The president's manipulation of the senseless tragedies experienced by the families in attendance last night, and his silence on last week's equally senseless murder of an Indian immigrant, sends a dangerous message that some lives are inherently worth more than others. Also absent from the president's remarks were an acknowledgment of the immense violence and pain inflicted on communities of color at the hands of police and immigration enforcement officers. We will not allow hate to be borne from the terrible grief of loss or for our communities to be divided by political manipulation."

"We welcome positive and commonsense reforms to our immigration system, reforms rooted in our values of inclusion and fair treatment, rather than in costly walls and policies that value skill over contribution. These reforms must include a second chance at opportunity for any person who has come into contact with our criminal justice system, as well as equal access to immigrants of all industry backgrounds. History has shown us that the safest and most economically-sound communities are the most inclusive and welcoming ones, not the ones who use deportation and family separation to stifle difference and diversity. We will continue our work towards a country that embraces and welcomes the perspectives and contributions of all of its residents, no matter their background."

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**About the Immigrant Legal Resource Center**

*The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is a national nonprofit that works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, law enforcement, and policy makers to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Through community education programs, legal training & technical assistance, and policy development & advocacy, the ILRC's mission is to protect and defend the fundamental rights of immigrant families and communities. [www.ilrc.org](http://www.ilrc.org)*