

WHEREAS, during the week of April 17, 2006, the federal government conducted a nationwide raid and arrested over one thousand undocumented employees of IFCO Systems of North America, a crate and pallet manufacturer headquartered in Houston, Texas; and

WHEREAS, the raid—said to be the largest ever work-site enforcement operation against a single employer—consisted of searches and warrant executions on forty work plants in cities encompassing twenty-six states; and

WHEREAS, approximately 26 people were arrested in the company's Chicago facility; and

WHEREAS, this operation is a component of U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff's stated campaign to target employers that hire undocumented workers; and

WHEREAS, indicating that the campaign targets employers is disingenuous when those who are arrested and face deportation are the 1,187 employees; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's legal authority to undertake such a "shock and awe" mission among immigrant communities does not diminish the nefarious intent and effect of producing a chilling effect within them; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's announcement of these raids comes on the heels of a national news story citing pressure being mounted upon the U.S. to apologize for the forced exodus of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans during the 1930's; and

WHEREAS, the government-orchestrated systematic deportations of the 1930's in the forcible removal of about two million people of Mexican ancestry, approximately 1.2 million of whom were U.S. born; and

WHEREAS, the inextricable link between immigrants and the economic foundation of the country we live in today had been forged by the 1920's with immigrants present and sharecropping in California, Texas, and Louisiana, harvesting sugar beets in Montana and Minnesota, laying railroad tracks in Kansas, mining coal in Utah and Oklahoma, packing meat in Chicago, and assembling cars in Detroit; and

WHEREAS, the raids that were conducted then had the acknowledged effect of coercing thousands of individuals, in addition to those directly deported, to leave the country in the face of a threatening and violent environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 2006, California made effective the "Apology Act for the 1930's Repatriation Program;" and

WHEREAS, in so doing, California acknowledges that the activities of the 1930's were "fundamental violations" of "basic civil liberties and constitutional rights;" and

WHEREAS, like the raids of April 2006, those staged during the 1930's were well-publicized events in which individuals—documented or not—were rounded up and detained during often aggressive interrogation; and

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of the April 2006 raids, local media has issued reports of individuals in immigrant communities keeping their children home from school, not going to work, not patronizing local businesses, and not leaving their homes; and

WHEREAS, these raids took place in the midst of vigorous nationwide debate on immigration laws and policies that have culminated in nationwide demonstrations, lobbying efforts, and legislative activity in the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, although the raids can be said to lawfully target illegal immigrants for removal, their effect is to create an environment that is ripe for intimidation, harassment, and racial profiling; and

WHEREAS, for the past 150 years, the City of Chicago has been hope and home to immigrants from throughout the globe; and

WHEREAS, the metropolitan Chicago area is home to over 1.4 million immigrants; and

WHEREAS, immigrants are 26% of Chicago's work force and an unquantifiable part of the City's history, character, and functions; and

WHEREAS, applauding the widespread condemnation of the terrorizing repatriation efforts of the 1930's while condoning how the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has conducted its recent raids amounts to denouncing history as we repeat it; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the mayor and members of the Chicago City council, reject any practice that fosters an undue fear of persecution among this City's communities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement are called upon to issue a moratorium on immigration raids until our national elected officials reach an accord on the nation's immigration policy so as to allow such a policy to emerge from an environment of good faith discourse unencumbered by fear; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; that a suitable copy of this Resolution be presented to the United States Senators from the State of Illinois, Senator Barack Obama and Senator Richard Durbin.

Edward M. Burke
Alderman 14th Ward

Daniel S. Solis
Alderman, 25th Ward