

Second Grader Speaks to First Lady on behalf of 5.5 Million Children in the U.S.

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Washington D.C. - In the midst of a loud, long and contentious battle over immigration, a soft voice emerged yesterday which spoke volumes about our nation's broken immigration system - and the fear and havoc it creates in the lives of million of young people in America. "My mom... she says that Barack Obama is taking everybody away that doesn't have papers," whispered a second grade girl in Silver Spring, Maryland, to Michele Obama during her visit to that school yesterday. Her honesty was powerful testimony on behalf of 5.5 million children (75% of which are U.S. Citizens) in America, who have at least one parent without proper immigration status.

For several years a range of academics have documented the powerful effect this uncertain future is having on the lives of children in America. The Immigration Policy Center has produced fact sheets and provides links which highlight these various studies.

- [*The Ones They Leave Behind: Deportation of Lawful Permanent Residents Harm U.S. Citizen Children* \[1\]](#) highlights more than 100,000 children were affected by deportation of a legal immigrant parent between 1997 and 2007. At least 88,000 of these children were U.S. citizens and 217,000 other immediate family members were affected by the deportation of a legal permanent resident.
- [*Protecting Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Raids* \[2\]](#) highlights the consequences of parental arrest, detention, and deportation on 190 children in 85 families in six locations across the country. The report found that raids and other ICE actions that separate parents and children pose serious risks to children's immediate safety, economic security, well-being, and long-term development. In most cases, two-parent homes became single-parent families after one parent was detained. At least 20 families in the study were forced to decide whether children-many of whom are native born U.S. citizens-would leave the country with their deported parent or remain with the other parent or other relatives. The Urban Institute interviewed families affected by ICE actions at the following six sites.
- [*A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States* \[3\]](#), by the Pew Hispanic Center, finds that a growing share of the children of unauthorized immigrant parents - 73% - were born in this country and are U.S. citizens.

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Links:

[1]
<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/../../../../just-facts/ones-they-leave-behind-deportation-lawful-permanent-residents-harm-us-citizen-children>

[2]
<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/../../../../just-facts/protecting-children-aftermath-immigration-raids>

[3] <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1190/portrait-unauthorized-immigrants-states>

[4]
http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Second_Grader_and_First_Lady_052010.pdf