

By: Reynolds

H.C.R. No. 19

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has
2 strayed far from its original mission, gaining a disturbing
3 reputation as a mass-deportation strike force incompatible with
4 democracy and human rights; and

5 WHEREAS, In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks against our
6 nation, ICE was established to promote national security by
7 preventing "acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money, and
8 materials that support terrorist and criminal activities"; the
9 agency grew wildly in subsequent years, losing its focus as its
10 budget ballooned with multimillion dollar contracts for private
11 companies backed by swarms of lobbyists; and

12 WHEREAS, Today, some 8,000 ICE agents are tasked with
13 locating, arresting, detaining, and removing undocumented
14 immigrants; only about 6,000 are involved in tracking the
15 terrorists and transnational crime syndicates that present a grave
16 peril to the nation and its people; these agents in ICE's Homeland
17 Security Investigations division combat money laundering, drug
18 trafficking, human smuggling, child exploitation, and cybercrimes;
19 in counter-proliferation operations, they target individuals
20 attempting to smuggle military and high-tech equipment out of the
21 country; HSI has also been involved in such complex, high-profile
22 cases as the takedown of the nefarious Silk Road website and the
23 arrest and capture of Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín "El Chapo"
24 Guzmán Loera; and

1 WHEREAS, In June 2018, 19 special agents in charge of
2 regional HSI offices submitted a letter to the secretary of
3 Homeland Security requesting that their division be spun off from
4 ICE, stating that their work has been undermined by ICE's
5 controversial detention and deportation policies; they cited a
6 breakdown in partnerships with local law enforcement officials, who
7 question the independence of their agency in light of aggressive
8 measures against immigration; such actions include targeting
9 families at churches and schools, conducting massive raids,
10 arresting undocumented workers for minor offenses, and breaking up
11 families by sending longtime U.S. residents to countries they
12 hardly know; and

13 WHEREAS, While resources are directed away from agents
14 dedicated to national security, ICE exercises increased
15 surveillance of communities of color and immigrant communities;
16 moreover, its draconian detention policies have filled the coffers
17 of companies that run for-profit facilities with a long, troubling
18 history of lax oversight, unsafe conditions, and grotesque
19 mistreatment, as documented by the DHS Office of Inspector General;
20 in the 2019 fiscal year alone, ICE detained more than 510,000
21 immigrants, 81 percent of whom were held in such private
22 facilities, costing taxpayers millions of dollars; and

23 WHEREAS, Before the creation of ICE, immigration violations
24 were handled by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which
25 was part of the Department of Justice and worked closely with the
26 Department of Labor; the inclusion of these functions under ICE has
27 led to the deprioritization of transnational crime fighting while

1 framing immigration, historically an engine of economic
2 development and societal enrichment, as a national security threat;
3 ICE has become a bloated agency tainted by controversy and largely
4 unmoored from its original purpose, and the responsible path
5 forward is to transfer its critical national security functions and
6 develop a more humane and effective immigration system that
7 complies with constitutional protections, domestic law, and
8 binding international treaties; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas
10 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to abolish U.S.
11 Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and, be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
13 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
14 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
15 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the
16 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that
17 this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a
18 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.