

Getting police *out* of deportation: key frames and messagesⁱ

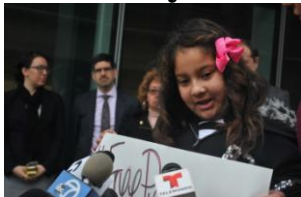
In recent months, a burst of hateful, nativist rhetoric has intensified the criminalization of immigrants. As the Obama administration doubles down on cruel deportation tactics, xenophobic forces are attacking policies that separate local police and sheriffs from an unjust deportation system.

But with strong, values-based messages and strategic grassroots campaigns, immigrant rights advocates have the power to rally significant public support

Last fall, focus groups in four citiesⁱⁱ explored voter attitudes on these issues among moderate to liberal voters who, like the majority of the U.S. publicⁱⁱⁱ, generally support legalization over deportation. The groups highlighted several frames that advocates can invoke to advance policies that disentangle local police from ICE. Significantly, these groups suggested that despite Donald Trump’s exploitation of the tragic killing at San Francisco’s pier 14 last summer, that isolated tragedy is **not** a major influence on these voters’ views – even in that city.

Here is a “menu” briefly summarizing key themes you can use to build your messages. In any communications effort, consider your vision and goals, the concerns and interests of your audiences and target decision-makers, and what shared values you can use to push your targets, inspire your base, and build new support.

1. Deep community & family roots



- **What immigrants mean to our communities: family ties, participation**
- **Social cost deportation to families and communities.**

Overall, talking about how immigrants are deeply rooted in our families and communities is one of the most effective messages for core audiences.

2. Safety for all



- We're all safer when victims, witnesses can come forward, get help
- Entangling police with deportation *further* undermines trust, safety

It's important to frame safety from a participatory, not punitive, lens and recognize that African-American & other community of color *already* have a serious crisis of confidence in police.

Due Process



ICE requests violate values of fairness, due process:

- Lack of probable cause; risk of mistakes
- Holding people without probable cause after they should be freed

For campaigns seeking complete police-ICE separation, due process is a key message.

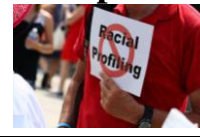
Local resources



ICE shouldn't force locals to do its "job"

(Call for transparency, accountability)

Racial profiling



Anyone who 'looks like an immigrant' at risk from police-ICE entanglement

Sample talking points – policies with no ICE entanglement

Immigrants are deeply rooted in our families and communities.

- Immigrants are parents and children, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends who participate in and contribute to our communities.
- Having police help ICE carry out mass deportation will cause much suffering as families are torn apart.

Our communities are safer without police acting as deportation agents

- Turning our local jail into a pipeline for deportation puts victims and witnesses to crimes at risk and makes it harder for them to come forward and get help
- In the deportation system, people can languish for years without even seeing a judge. Mixing up our local law enforcement with a system that completely lacks due process further undermines confidence in law enforcement.
- [Context] At a time when mass incarceration and racial profiling have already created a crisis of confidence in law enforcement for communities of color, entanglement with ICE makes things even worse.

We need our local government to get out of the deportation business.

- ICE wants to seize our local resources to make immigrants disappear - without a judge or due process, but with big profits for private detention centers. This could lead to racial profiling and detaining anyone who looks like an immigrant.
- ICE is so addicted to deportations it doesn't care if makes mistakes - it's even targeted citizens and people who long ago served their time.
- We need to shine a light of truth on what ICE is hiding. At minimum, a judge should make sure ICE's requests have probable cause.
 - [For “notification” policies] ICE *already* automatically gets the fingerprints of every person arrested. Our local law enforcement should stay out of deportations - not use our local resources to do ICE’s unjust “job” for it

When police stay out of deportation, families stay together and we uphold our values.

People with convictions

When discussing community members who have convictions:

- Explain that requests for deportation can be triggered by mistaken arrest or long ago convictions after which the person has served time and become a contributing member of society.
- Use concrete, rather than hypothetical, examples of rehabilitation - people who have turned their lives around
- Avoid using dehumanizing terms like “criminals”

Responding to hard questions

Address your audiences' doubts on our terms, with strategic values - not the opposition's talking points.

But shouldn't "criminals" be deported?

Immigrants are deeply rooted in our families and communities. When we transfer people to ICE without review from a judge, we violate our values of due process and open the door to painful mistakes. We need to remember that ICE's deportation requests target people who long ago served their time and have changed their lives.

But the sheriff says this is for public safety?

Actually, when police and ICE are entangled, that further undermines community confidence in law enforcement and puts even victims and witnesses of crimes at risk. For example, survivors of domestic violence who were arrested along with the person committing the abuse have then been turned over to ICE for deportation.

What about the pier 14 shooting in San Francisco?

The shooting was a terrible tragedy. It's irresponsible for anti-immigrant forces like Donald Trump to exploit this isolated tragedy to drum up support for mass deportations of millions of people.

Additional suggestions

Recommendations	Framing to reconsider
Say "local law enforcement should stay out of deportation"	Avoid saying law enforcement should "not cooperate" with ICE
Talk about immigrants' family ties and contributions	Avoid basing your arguments on the need for Comprehensive Immigration reform
Explain that people targeted may have been mistakenly arrested or have "served their time";	Avoid saying "felons, not families," "criminals."

ⁱ Prepared by Jon Rodney, California Immigrant Policy Center, Feb. 2016

ⁱⁱ Belden Russonello Strategists conducted eight focus groups in Chicago, Los Angeles, Alexandria, Virginia, and San Francisco in October and early November 2015, sponsored by Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) in conjunction with several immigrant rights groups. All participants in the discussions were voters with at least a high school education and were screened for their support of a path to legalization. Four "swing" discussions were held among those who leaned against community trust policies: three groups of whites and one among African-Americans. Four "core" groups were held among those who leaned in support of the policies: two groups of whites, one with Latinos and Latinas, and one with API voters.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example: http://americasvoice.org/press_releases/new-poll-americans-support-syrian-refugee-admissions-strongly-favor-legalization-over-deportation-and-view-immigrants-as-strengthening-the-nation/