The Postville Project

April 2019

Agriprocessors probe necessary

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/postville_documents

Part of the Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation

https://scholarworks.uni.edu/postville_documents/171

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the The Postville Project at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Postville Project Documents by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.
Agriprocessors probe necessary

As the Postville immigration raid saga continues to unfold, some of our political leaders are questioning whether federal immigration officials should be looking at penalizing the employer, Agriprocessors.

The simple answer is: Absolutely.

Employers, companies and corporations that flout U.S. immigration laws are an enormous part of the illegal immigration equation. Anytime nearly 400 employees are rounded up in an immigration raid, the company that employed the workers needs to be looked at closely.

About 40 percent of the work force at the Postville plant was arrested.

"This figure alone raises questions about Agriprocessors' commitment to making sure they have a legal work force," U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley wrote in a letter to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which conducted Monday's raids.

Braley is urging ICE to "fully investigate" Agriprocessors for possible immigration law violations.

He's not alone. Gov. Chet Culver released a statement shortly after the raids.

"I have said before that I believe it is important that we crack down on illegal immigration," he said. "Illegal means illegal, not just those who are crossing the border illegally, but also those who are responsible for helping to make it happen - traffickers, identity thieves, those who knowingly hire illegal immigrants and anyone who has taken advantage of employees or turned a blind eye."

Since the beginning, Culver has expressed support in going after employers who hire illegal workers and in some cases, exploit them.

"That does not reflect well on Iowa businesses," he added. "So any criminal activity that is taking place by an Iowa business, allegedly in this case, is not a good signal and I think those involved should be held accountable."

All across America, those fuming against the number of illegal immigrants thought to be in our country need to take a close look at the businesses in their own back yards. Illegal immigrants are willing to take the chance of entering, working and staying in the country because they realize there are employers willing to violate U.S. law by hiring undocumented immigrants.

That willingness has helped create rings that deal in identity theft and Social Security fraud.

U.S. Sen Tom Harkin also said the Postville case creates "troubling questions" about the hiring process at Agriprocessors, and has called for a full investigation.

"I have always supported vigorous enforcement of our immigration laws, but we have to enforce our laws equally," he said. "If employers are knowingly hiring undocumented workers, they must be held accountable."
This year, Iowa lawmakers considered measures to crack down on employers who hire illegal immigrants but failed to get a bill passed through both chambers before adjourning in late April.

Had this raid occurred a month ago, you can bet some type of measure, levying increased scrutiny upon employers, would have been approved.

Now that the Agriprocessors raid is being called the largest of its kind in the nation, many eyes outside of our state borders are upon us.

A full investigation of Agriprocessors is indeed warranted and could send a message to employers around the country.