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Statement by Senator Tom Harkin

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STATEMENT BY SENATOR TOM HARKIN

On the One-Year Anniversary of the Raid on Agriprocessors, Inc.

“Today marks the one-year anniversary of the mass arrests at Agriprocessors, Inc., in Postville. I commend St. Bridget’s Church, local charities, and the entire Postville community for coming together with compassion and generosity to assist the families of those arrested in the raid.

“The tragedy at Postville has highlighted the harsh reality that our current immigration system is unworkable and unacceptable. The status quo has trapped some 12 million undocumented immigrants in a lawless limbo, and has allowed unscrupulous employers to operate a shadow economy based on exploitation and law-breaking. Postville has exemplified a system that is broken and in need of urgent reform.

“I salute the Obama Administration for announcing recently that the Department of Homeland Security will refocus its worksite enforcement on unscrupulous employers who take advantage of our broken immigration system. These employers and their methods are one of the root causes of undocumented immigration. I am pleased that the Administration’s new guidelines call for aggressively investigating and prosecuting employers who break the law.

“I am also pleased that President Obama recently reaffirmed his strong commitment to comprehensive immigration reform, and stated his intention to initiate action by the end of the year. I look forward to working with him to create a new immigration system that is fair to American workers and taxpayers, and that offers a practical, humane solution to the reality that millions of undocumented immigrants are within our borders.

“Finally, I remain hopeful that a purchaser will be found to operate the plant, one who will not only provide much needed employment opportunities, but will also be a good corporate citizen. I will do all I can to make that happen.”

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