March 3, 2009

Re: Child Citizen Protection Act (H.R. 182)

Dear Congress Member:

This letter is to encourage you to support The Child Citizen Protection Act (H.R. 182), an act that will change the lives of thousands of American children by providing immigration judges with the discretion to consider the best interests of U.S. citizen children before ordering his or her parent deported. Every year, more than 100,000 non-citizen parents are deported and torn away from their families even when a judge thinks they deserve to stay in the U.S. to help raise and support those families. Mandatory deportation has heart-breaking effects on American children who are either separated from their parents or forced to start over in a country that is not their own.

The Child Citizen Protection Act is an opportunity for us to show that we truly value families and that the health, safety and well-being of our nation’s children are important to us. We have included more information about the bill in this packet for your review. We are asking that Representatives co-sponsor H.R. 182 and Senators introduce the Act in the Senate. By supporting the Child Citizen Protection Act, you will change the lives of thousands of U.S. citizen children, giving them a voice and thinking of their interests. Supporting this Act is a great opportunity to confirm that the well-being of all American children is a top priority. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Janis H. Rosheuvel
Executive Director
Families for Freedom
Help Protect American Families: Support H.R. 182

March 31, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Throughout our nation’s history immigrants have flocked to our shores. These are frequently journeys of hope, but they are also times of sadness as family members are left behind. Unfortunately, our current immigration policy does not simply obstruct the reunification of families (although it does so), but, in fact, actively pulls them apart.

Under our current immigration law, US citizen children lose their parents because judges are not allowed to take into account the interests of the children when they are ruling whether or not to order the removal of the parents from the country. Therefore, a minor, decade old offense can result in a family being forced to choose between losing a parent and staying together and moving a child to a country he or she has never known.

In order to address this injustice, I have introduced H.R. 182, the Child Citizen Protection Act, to help protect American families from these unfair policies. This legislation would protect American children and families by returning discretion to immigration judges in cases where removal of an immigrant is clearly contrary to the best interest of a United States citizen child. My bill would not require that the parents remain in the country, it would simply allow the judge to consider the interests of the child when he or she weighs the evidence in the case, as they were allowed to do before the 1996 immigration reforms.

For a nation of immigrants like our own, immigration policy is necessarily a matter of balancing the interests of aspiring citizens with those of current citizens. However, an immigration system that separates parent from child and disrupts whole communities by removing breadwinners from intact families is undeniably flawed and needs to be fixed. My bill would be a small step towards improving our immigration policies by restoring much needed judicial discretion.

If you have any questions or would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact George Sullivan at ext. 5-4361 or george.sullivan@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress
Interfaith Coalition Supports Child Citizen Protection Act

6/5/2008

Dear Members of the House of Representatives,

We, the undersigned faith-based leaders and organizations, express our firm support of the Child Citizen Protection Act, H.R. 1176, sponsored by Representative Serrano (NY-16). As members of a variety of faith traditions, we call on Congress to enact this important piece of legislation that could keep families together and strengthen U.S. communities.

In 1996, mandatory deportation for many non-citizens – lawful permanent residents included – became a part of U.S. immigration law and judges were stripped of any and all discretion to rule in the best interest of a child whose family is involved in immigration proceedings. This policy has denied families the opportunity to plead their cases and has proven detrimental to the well-being of thousands of children, including children who are U.S. citizens. Since 1996, 1.6 million spouses and children have been left behind to cope after a family member has been forcibly deported.

The Child Citizen Protection Act seeks to return judicial discretion to immigration judges so they can take into account the well-being of a U.S. citizen child when determining if their non-citizen parent should be forcibly deported. If enacted, this legislation could have a significant impact on families comprised of both citizens and non-citizens, as judges could decide to let undocumented parents remain in the United States with their children.

Fifteen percent of all families in the United States include at least one non-citizen parent and a U.S. citizen child. We recognize that parental involvement is critical to the development of children, as a close parent-child relationship increases the likelihood of a child’s academic success, physical health, and emotional well-being. The Child Citizen Protection Act would have the potential to keep families together and allow children to grow and develop into thoughtful and contributing adult citizens.

This legislation would also positively impact U.S. communities overall. By restoring judicial discretion, The Child Citizen Protection Act would protect the economic contributions of non-citizens, as well as the future contributions of their children, as they are able to be nurtured by their parents in a stable and unified family environment.

As faith communities, we value family unity and believe that the well-being of children should be taken into account during immigration and deportation proceedings. **We urge all members of Congress to cosponsor and support the Child Citizen Protection Act to restore judicial discretion to protect family unity and the well-being of the nation’s children.**

Respectfully,
H. R. 182

To provide discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an alien parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed, deported, or excluded from the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 6, 2009

Mr. SERRANO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an alien parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed, deported, or excluded from the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO REMOVAL, DEPORTATION, OR EXCLUSION OF PARENTS OF CITIZEN CHILDREN.

Section 240(c)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1229a(c)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

...
“(D) DISCRETION OF JUDGE IN CASE OF
CITIZEN CHILD.—In the case of an alien subject
to removal, deportation, or exclusion who is the
parent of a child who is a citizen of the United
States, the immigration judge may exercise dis-
cretion to decline to order the alien removed,
deported or excluded from the United States if
the judge determines that such removal, depor-
tation, or exclusion is clearly against the best
interests of the child, except that this subpara-
graph shall not apply to any alien who the
judge determines—

“(i) is described in section 212(a)(3)
or 237(a)(4); or

“(ii) has engaged in conduct described
in paragraph (8) or (9) of section 103 of
the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of
2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).”.

○
Child Citizen Protection Act Current Co-Sponsors 2009


Child Citizen Protection Act Current Co-Sponsors 2007-8

WASHINGTON (AP) -- More than 100,000 parents whose children are U.S. citizens were deported over the decade that ended in 2007, a Department of Homeland Security's investigation has found.

The parents were removed from the country on immigration violations or because they had committed crimes. The removals of the 108,434 parents were among the approximately 2.2 million carried out by immigration officials between 1998 and 2007, Homeland Security Inspector General Richard Skinner said in a report made public Friday.

Skinner warned the numbers were incomplete because Immigration and Customs Enforcement doesn't fully document such cases. The agency also does not keep track of how many children each parent has. He recommended immigration officials start collecting more data on removed parents and their children.

In response to the findings, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement said it would study whether it can gather better information. Its study is due in about two months.

"I am saddened, but not surprised to learn that our government, in its harsh anti-immigrant stance, has split hundreds of thousands of families apart over the past decade," said Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y.

Serrano serves on the House Appropriations Committee's panel that helps decide how much money is provided to the Homeland Security Department each year. He has filed a bill, the Child Citizen Protection Act, that would allow immigration judges to consider whether immigrants have children who are U.S. citizens when making deportation decisions.

"If, in fact, some (children) were left behind here, then you have the sad tragedy of breaking up families," Serrano said. "If they were taken back, I would argue the direct result of our actions is the deportation of our citizens. How do you deport a U.S. citizen?"

Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Barbara Gonzales said the agency was reviewing the report and was unable to comment immediately.

Children of immigrant families who are U.S. citizens have long created a dilemma for Congress as it has tried to control immigration. People born in the U.S. automatically become U.S. citizens. But American children cannot
petition for their parents to become legal U.S. residents until they are at least 21.

Immigration officials reported 319,382 deportations in 2007, compared to 174,813 in 1998. Skinner said the number of parents removed over that period generally increased, with 13,081 individual parents removed in 1998.

Some of the parents were removed from the country more than once, so in the 10 years there were actually 180,466 removals of the 108,434 parents.

-----


Homeland Security Department IG reports: http://www.dhs.gov/xoig/rpts/
Testimony as read by Rose at the New York City Council before they passed Resolution 1250 calling on Congress to pass the Child Citizen Protection Act on March 26, 2008.

Good Afternoon.

My names is Rose and I am 11 years old. My father and mother have been here all of my life. I have two brothers and two sisters and we were all born in the United States. One day, not too long ago, we had a very frightening experience. Over six policemen came banging on our door looking for a man who immigration wanted to arrest.

My sisters, brothers and myself were shaking so hard from fear that they were going to take away my daddy. I knew from conversations that there was a chance that I was going to lose my daddy someday since he is undocumented and new laws say that he must leave us and mommy alone.

These men scared us so much and made us have so many questions that I still don't understand why do these men want to take away my daddy? I know that my family could not survive without our daddy. If they take my daddy away, will I ever see him again? How will five little kids, like me, survive along with only our mommy?

I can't pay attention in school because I am always thinking of what can happen. Every little noise of knock on the door at home or at school reminds me of what had happened and I start shaking again.

I would look at my little sisters and brothers and see that they also were very scared. Not knowing if this would happen again and if they would take our daddy away is so hard.

I cannot begin to understand why this is happening to us and how many other families have lost their daddies or mommies like this.

That is why everybody here should support the Child Citizen Protection Act. That's why people everywhere should care about families like ours.

Thank you and have a good day.
January 19, 2009

Dear Barack Obama,

   My name is Bintou (bin-2) and I am 10 years old in the 5th grade turning 11 on May 18. I am writing to you about this because on July 20th 2007, the day after my dad’s birthday, the immigration police took him. They deported him November 16th 2007.

   On July 20th, 2007 in the morning time at 6:00am sharp the immigration police came and knocked on our door. They were two police. They came with a copy of a man’s ID card. That person was African just like us, but he was not my dad. The super told the police that Africans live in Apt 1CN. They came in and asked for everyone’s ID. They looked at the IDs and threw my mom’s and aunt’s IDs on the couch. They looked at my dad’s and uncle’s and handcuffed them and left.

   Till that day, I have not seen my father. Now he is in Africa in Senegal with my cousins. We call him and talk to him. We hope and will wait for our dad to come back. My mom is not a citizen. She takes care of us and buys everything we need. We are 6 children and my mom takes care of all of us.

   So President Obama, will you change this law? We hope you do. Thanks for reading this letter and enjoy your new life living in the White House with your family. Bye!

Barack Obama! You’re our new president for 4 years. ROCK ON! YEAH! Have a good time Malia, Sasha, and Michelle.

Sincerely,

Bintou Fofana
Bronx New York

P.S. Thanks for reading my letter and I hope you listened real close to how people feel.
VALUING OUR FAMILIES AND OUR CHILDREN: Child Citizen Protection Act (H.R. 182)

Every immigrant’s story is a story about family. As the immigration debate heats up across the nation, one group of citizens has a unique stake in it: the American-born children of immigrants.

MYTHS vs. FACTS...

MYTH: “The immigration debate doesn’t affect me, because I am a U.S. citizen.”

FACT: Immigration affects all of us. Immigration is not just about green cards, borders or someone else’s family. It affects all of us. Immigrants do not live in isolation. We share zip codes, jobs, schools, places of worship and families. Nearly 1 in 10 American families are of mixed immigration status: at least one parent is a non-citizen, and one child a citizen. An estimated 3.1 million US citizen children have at least one parent who is undocumented.

MYTH: “Our immigration system considers US citizen children before deporting an immigrant parent.”

FACT: Today’s immigration laws force parents to abandon their US citizen children.

In 1996, our immigration system made deportation a mandatory punishment for many non-citizens—including long-term and lawful permanent residents. When punishment is mandatory, judges do not have a say in deciding if deportation is fair, robbing immigrant families of a day in court and a chance to show how permanent exile from the U.S. would impact their family.

The result? Every year, nearly 300,000 non-citizens—many with kids who are U.S. citizens—are deported and torn away from their families even when a judge thinks they deserve to stay in the U.S. to help raise and support those families. Under mandatory deportation, the judge’s hands are tied. Families must choose between splitting up, resulting in more single parent households and psychological and financial hardship, or forcing their U.S. citizen children into deportation with them. These American children may have to start over in a country with a new language, fewer resources and an uncertain future. America’s immigration laws force American children to lose their parent, or their country. Mandatory deportation is a life sentence of exile. Such a severe, “one size fits all” punishment cannot be the basis of our immigration system.

WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?

Congressman Jose Serrano (D-NY) introduced the Child Citizen Protection Act (H.R. 182), a limited bill to restore justice to our immigration system by allowing U.S. citizen children to be heard before a parent is taken away. The Child Citizen Protection Act would address the harshest provisions of the 1996 laws and allow immigration judges to consider whether deportation is “clearly against the best interests of a US citizen child”. It preserves the basic notion of fairness that should define the U.S. justice system. It allows judges to judge, and families to have a day in court.

The Child Citizen Protection Act is an opportunity for our leaders to show that they truly value families, that the health, safety and well being of our nation’s children are a top priority.

For more info call Families for Freedom at 646-290-5551 or Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights at 212-781-0355 ext. 311.
FACTSHEET: THE IMPACT OF DEPORTATION ON AMERICAN CHILDREN: Child Citizen Protection Act (H.R. 182)

Every day, children born and raised in the United States watch helplessly as their families are torn apart by immigration raids and deportation. The Child Citizen Protection Act provides a small but necessary safety valve in the process for the consideration of the best interests of U.S. citizen children.

Countless American children are affected by deportations and raids.

- Nearly 1 in 10 American families are of mixed immigration status: at least one parent is a non-citizen, and one child a citizen.
- Since 1997, when new laws came into effect, over 2.3 million people have been deported—many forced to leave American children behind.
- Massive raids in workplaces and homes have made the impact on American children much worse. In just a two-year period, over 13,000 American children have been separated from one or more parents due to the increased immigration raids alone.

Children suffer serious physical, psychological, and socioeconomic harm when separated from their parents due to deportations and raids.

- Recent studies and articles describe a long list of problems faced by the children of immigrants when a parent is deported: emotional trauma and mental health problems; financial hardship and limitations on access to housing and food; interference with school and educational opportunities; fear and isolation.
- Despite the significant impact that deportation policies have on children, they often have no voice in what happens to their families in the immigration system.

The Child Citizen Protection Act is necessary and sensible legislation that ensures that children’s best interests are considered.

- The Child Citizen Protection Act ensures that an immigration judge may consider the best interests of a U.S. citizen child before his or her parent is deported.
- The Act does not create status for the parent facing deportation or prevent the government from starting an immigration case against a parent. It merely creates a safety valve for consideration of the U.S. citizen children who will be impacted by deportation decisions.

For more information about the Child Citizen Protection Act, please contact Families for Freedom at 646-290-5551 and Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights at 212-781-0355 ext. 311.

www.familiesforfreedom.org
Roxroy Salmon is a national of Jamaica who has lived in the United States for the past thirty years. He came to the U.S. with his father when he was a young man to seek a good education and to accomplish his goals.

He has four beautiful children that were born in the U.S. He also has a daughter who was born in Jamaica. He adores all of his children. He lives with three of his children: Natasha, an 18 year old who attends Long Island University for legal studies, Nyasia, a 15 year old studying design at her high school and Elijah, a 12 year old in middle school.

Roxroy is an organizer at Families for Freedom and a member of the New Sanctuary Coalition. Because of minor drug convictions from over 20 years ago, he is facing removal proceedings. He believes that everyone deserves their human right to stay with their families. He is working hard to pass legislation that would keep his family together: HR 182, the Child Citizen Protection Act (CCPA). This bill, if passed, would allow immigration judges the power to use their discretion in Roxroy’s case, allowing them to stop his deportation.

“I live and breathe for my children. It is my greatest honor. I teach my children decency and moral values because I was brought up that way. I teach them to be good human beings; to love God, themselves and their neighbors. I just can’t bear the thought of being away from my family- most of all my children and grandchildren, my brothers and sisters and my mother.” - Roxroy

For more information about Roxroy’s immigration case, the CCPA or to find out how you can help support his family, call Families for Freedom at (646) 290-5551 or the New Sanctuary Coalition: (212) 477-0351.

www.familiesforfreedom.org
www.newsanctuarymovement.org
What would you do if your family was separated?

Why We Need the Child Citizen Protection Act

“So families can stay together”
--Rose, age 12

“So families can keep taking care of each other”
--Maylee, age 9

What is the CCPA?

by Fanta (age 12) and Rose (age 12), Families for Freedom Youth Committee

The Child Citizen Protection Act (CCPA) was introduced into the House of Representatives by NY Rep. Jose Serrano (16th District) as H.R. 182 in January 2009. The CCPA would give family members a chance to be heard by judges on why their loved ones should not be deported. This bill would give back power to judges to consider the interests of U.S. citizen children. We need to tell the government that the immigration system must consider the children before deporting a parent!

We need the CCPA because it could really help families stay together. That is exactly what we need in this world, especially this country. It is really important if we care about families in the U.S.

Every kid whose parents might get deported should stick with the CCPA. Many kids who do not have their parents maybe didn’t know about this bill. But now we are speaking out!

“What You Can Do:

Send a postcard to your U.S. Representative to support CCPA (download at http://www.familiesforfreedom.org/files/AmericanKidsPostcard.pdf)

Call us at our office to find out more:
Families for Freedom at 646-290-5551

THE CHILD CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT: What You Can Do In the Fight for Family Unity

By Betsy DeWitt, Families for Freedom member and board member

The Child Citizen Protection Act (CCPA) is considered by many to be "the best kept secret in the immigration debate." If we all work diligently, we can change that perception and make this bill a reality, saving many families from lifelong separation. First, a little history, and then some concrete suggestions on how to move this legislation.

On February 2, 2007, Representative José Serrano of the 16th District of NY (in the Bronx!) introduced HR 1176, the Child Citizen Protection Act. This bill provides discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an immigrant parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed, deported, or excluded from the U.S. In layman's terms, it means that the power of decision-making would be returned to immigration judges when "the best interests" of a U.S. citizen child hang in the balance. The legislation would apply to both undocumented immigrants and legal immigrants with convictions, though some exclusions would apply.

On March 19, 2007, the bill was referred to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration. Since that time, it has garnered 32 co-sponsors in the House. In March 2008, the NYC Council passed Resolution 1250 in support of the CCPA and asked Congress to pass this legislation.

In April of this year, Families for Freedom and the New Sanctuary Movement held a Children's Vigil outside the NYC office of U.S. Senator Charles Schumer to ask that he introduce this bill in the Senate. To date, we have had no response from Senator Schumer and currently there is no sister bill in the Senate.

Now, here's what we can do to support this bill. First, check http://thomas.loc.gov/ to see if your Representative in Congress is listed as a co-sponsor. To do this, type in HR1176 and search under "Bill Number." Then, click on "Bill Status & Summary" and on "Co-sponsors." You will get a current list of who has signed on. If your Representative is listed, terrific! Send your Representative a thank you note and ask him or her to promote the bill to Congressional colleagues. If your Representative has not co-sponsored, write, call or email them asking them to do so. Better yet, make an appointment with your Representative's immigration aide to discuss the bill. Make sure that you are armed with the facts to back up your request. Families for Freedom's Fact Sheet is available at http://www.familiesforfreedom.org/httpdocs/americankids.html. If possible, bring an affected family with you on your visit. It makes a more powerful statement. If your Representative can't give you an answer on the spot, be sure to follow up with a phone call. Ask for their email address to send them additional information and as another avenue for follow-up. You can take the same measures with your Senators, but ask them to introduce the bill.

On a local level, you can approach your local city council or your state representatives and ask them to sponsor a resolution in support of the CCPA as the NYC Council did. To see NYC Resolution 

→ 1250, go to http://council.nyc.gov/ and click on legislation, then search resolutions for 2008. This can be used as a model for other city and state governments.

Additionally, writing letters to the editors of your local papers or writing op-ed articles calling for passage of the bill are both good ideas for spreading the word. Circulating petitions among your congregations, organizations, and neighborhoods will help to educate the public about the necessity for this legislation. The Internet can also be used effectively by posting videos on YouTube, creating My Space pages, and utilizing www.thepetitionsite.com to create online petitions.

The most important thing that you can do is to talk about the devastation that children and families face when a parent is deported, and how this legislation can help prevent it by allowing immigration judges to judge. It is up to us to educate ourselves and the public and to remind them of their responsibilities as children of God, no matter what their faith.
June 17, 2007

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Impounded Fathers

By EDWIDGE DANTICAT

MIAMI

MY father died in May 2005, after an agonizing battle with lung disease. This is the third Father’s Day that I will spend without him since we started celebrating together in 1981. That was when I moved to the United States from Haiti, after his own migration here had kept us apart for eight long years.

My father’s absence, then and now, makes all the more poignant for me the predicament of the following fathers who also deserve to be remembered today.

There is the father from Honduras who was imprisoned, then deported, after a routine traffic stop in Miami. He was forced to leave behind his wife, who was also detained by immigration officials, and his 5- and 7-year-old sons, who were placed in foster care. Not understanding what had happened, the boys, when they were taken to visit their mother in jail, asked why their father had abandoned them. Realizing that the only way to reunite his family was to allow his children to be expatriated to Honduras, the father resigned himself to this, only to get caught up in a custody fight with American immigration officials who have threatened to keep the boys permanently in foster care on the premise that their parents abandoned them.

There is also the father from Panama, a cleaning contractor in his 50s, who had lived and worked in the United States for more than 19 years. One morning, he woke to the sound of loud banging on his door. He went to answer it and was greeted by armed immigration agents. His 10-year asylum case had been denied without notice. He was handcuffed and brought to jail.

There is the father from Argentina who moves his wife and children from house to house hoping to remain one step ahead of the immigration raids. And the Guatemalan, Mexican and Chinese fathers who have quietly sought sanctuary from deportation at churches across the United States.

There’s the Haitian father who left for work one morning, was picked up outside his apartment and was deported before he got a chance to say goodbye to his infant daughter and his wife. There’s the other Haitian father, a naturalized American citizen, whose wife was deported three weeks before her residency hearing, forcing him to place his 4-year-old son in the care of neighbors while he works every waking hour to support two households.

These families are all casualties of a Department of Homeland Security immigration crackdown cheekily titled Operation Return to Sender. The goals of the operation, begun last spring, were to increase the enforcement of immigration laws in the workplace and to catch and deport criminals. Many women and men who have no criminal
records have found themselves in its cross hairs. More than 18,000 people have been deported since the operation began last year.

So while politicians debate the finer points of immigration reform, the Department of Homeland Security is already carrying out its own. Unfortunately, these actions can not only plunge families into financial decline, but sever them forever. One such case involves a father who was killed soon after he was deported to El Salvador last year.

“Something else could be done,” his 13-year-old son Junior pleaded to the New York-based advocacy group Families for Freedom, “because kids need their fathers.”

Right now the physical, emotional, financial and legal status of American-born minors like Junior can neither delay nor prevent their parents’ detention or deportation. Last year, Representative José E. Serrano, a Democrat from New York, introduced a bill that would allow immigration judges to take into consideration the fates of American-born children while reviewing their parents’ cases. The bill has gone nowhere, while more and more American-citizen children continue to either lose their parents or their country.

Where are our much-touted family values when it comes to these children? Today, as on any other day, they deserve to feel that they have not been abandoned — by either their parents or their country.

_Edwidge Danticat is the author of the forthcoming “Brother, I’m Dying,” a memoir._
The Child Citizen Protection Act Makes News

CCPA would keep families together

- “‘Countless families are literally being torn apart by often dehumanizing immigration laws and procedures. The Child Citizen Protection Act allows the process to include humane consideration for the children’s welfare during deportation proceedings, particularly when the children are U.S. citizens. It is imperative that we as a nation live up to our family values and not take actions that, in the end, harm children more than anybody else,’ said [Queens City Council Member John] Liu.” Demetria Irwin, *Deporting Parents, Punishing Children*, NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS, May 1, 2008.

- “More than 100,000 parents whose children are U.S. citizens were deported over the decade that ended in 2007, a Department of Homeland Security's investigation has found.” Report: Over 100,000 Deportees Had Children in US, N.Y. Times, Feb. 13, 2009.

- “I believe that most Americans would agree that it is wrong to separate families. Everyone of us that believes in family unity needs to contact their Congress person and ask them to support bills like the [Child Citizen Protection Act].” Betsy DeWitt comment posted in response to Julia Preston, *Readers Share Immigration Stories*, N.Y. TIMES, Apr. 11, 2008.

- “We must do everything in our power to keep families together, and to use common sense in our immigration laws. Children deserve better than to lose a parent because of an inflexible law. . . . [The Child Citizen Protection Act] is about helping children stay with their families.” Congressman Representing the Sixteenth District of New York, José Serrano. Press Release, Congressman José E. Serrano, Serrano Introduces “Child Citizen Protection Act” (Mar. 29, 2006).

- “It’s a dreadful choice… Would I take [my children] back to my slum in Honduras or leave them here? One of the most tragic things I’ve seen is when parents are detained and then their U.S.-born children have been placed in foster care. We are aware of several cases like that in Florida.” Maria Rodriguez, Executive Director, Florida Immigrant Coalition in Miami. Waveney Ann Moore, *As Immigration Status Divides Families, ‘You Can Feel the Fear’*. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES (FLORIDA), July 30, 2007.

- “I want people to understand that the immigration debate is about more than protecting our borders and sending illegals’ back… It’s about children that are left out of the equation because they do not have a voice.” Betsy DeWitt, U.S. citizen wife of deportee. Waveney Ann Moore, *As Immigration Status Divides Families, ‘You Can Feel the Fear’*. ST. PETERSBURG TIMES (FLORIDA), July 30, 2007.

CCPA would let judges consider the impact of deportation on U.S. born children

- “Generations of families may be sitting before the judge, but under mandatory deportation, the judges have no power . . . . The Child Citizen Protection Act changes it by saying: if you have citizen children, the judge is given the power by Congress to consider that child, weigh his or her well-being, and excuse deportation if it’s in the best interest of the child.” Monika Joshi, *Bill to Consider Citizen Kids When Deporting Parents*, INDIA ABROAD, Feb. 16, 2007.
The Child Citizen Protection Act Makes News

- “Youngsters and advocates from Families for Freedom held signs reading ‘Don’t Take Away My Mommy’ outside of Sen. Chuck Schumer’s Manhattan office, calling on the Democrat to support the Child Citizen Protection Act. ‘It's not easy, knowing your father can be deported at any time,’ said Elijah Salmon, 11, of Brooklyn, whose father is from Jamaica.” Carrie Melago, Don’t Deport My Dad, Kids Plead, DAILY NEWS (New York), Apr. 27, 2008.

- “[T]he Child Citizen Protection Act . . . provides discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an immigrant parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed, deported, or excluded from the U.S. In layman’s terms, it means that the power of decision-making would be returned to immigration judges when ‘the best interests’ of a U.S. citizen child hang in the balance.” Betsy DeWitt, The Child Citizen Protection Act: What You Can Do in the Fight for Family Unity, NEW YORK SANCTUARY COALITION, June 2008.

- “[P]arental involvement is critical to the development of children, as a close parent-child relationship increases the likelihood of a child’s academic success, physical health, and emotional well-being. The Child Citizen Protection Act would have the potential to keep families together and allow children to grow and develop into thoughtful and contributing adult citizens.” Interfaith Coalition Supports Child Citizen Protection Act, June 5, 2008.

- “This legislation would also positively impact U.S. communities overall. By restoring judicial discretion, The Child Citizen Protection Act would protect the economic contributions of non-citizens, as well as the future contributions of their children, as they are able to be nurtured by their parents in a stable and unified family environment.” Interfaith Coalition Supports Child Citizen Protection Act, June 5, 2008.

- “All relationships are sacred, especially the relationship between parents and children. We have faith that this [New York City Council resolution supporting the Child Citizen Protection Act] will signal the change that is needed to respect the holy bond of our families and communities.” Juan Carlos Ruiz, coordinate of the faith-based New Sanctuary Movement. Jenn Delgado & Samuel Delgado, New York City Council Passes Resolution to Keep Families Together. PEOPLE’S WEEKLY WORLD, Apr. 07, 2008.

- The Child Citizen Protection Act . . . would allow immigration judges to determine whether it’s in the best interest of a U.S. citizen child to have a parent deported. It’s incredible that such a bill is needed. But it comes in response to what immigration attorneys say is an unprecedented increase in deportations of nonviolent migrants with U.S.-born children.” Ana Menendez, In My Opinion: Immigration Law Broken, Unjust – Will We Fix It?, MIAMI HERALD, Mar. 18, 2007.