

## **Executive Summary**

In 2008, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) piloted a new way of identifying individuals for deportation. Utilizing local law enforcement, the program was called “Secure Communities” because its goal was to identify and remove “the most serious criminal offenders.” However, the program has become highly controversial as ICE’s own data indicates that has failed to fulfill its stated goal and is creating greater distrust and insecurity in local communities. The result is that a growing number of states and local jurisdictions are seeking to withdraw from the program or limit its impact in their communities.

On October 5, 2010, Champaign County became one of 26 counties in Illinois that actively participates in this controversial program. Soon after the program was activated in Champaign County, immigrants and their allies began hearing stories about local immigrants being stopped by local police and then sent off for deportation. Concerned with the stories they were hearing, they began researching this federal deportation program and meeting to see what they could. This report is a result of those efforts.

State, counties, and local police departments have identified enough serious flaws to motivate withdrawal from the Secure Communities (S-Comm) program. The details of why this is so are spelled out in the report ***Immigration Enforcement: The Dangerous Reality Behind “Secure Communities”*** released earlier this year by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR). This Champaign County Addendum to the original ICIRR report takes a closer look at the experience in Champaign County, Illinois where local residents have encountered and documented many of the problems seen at the national and state levels. The report findings include:

- **S-Comm Catches and Deports the Wrong People.** ICE’s data for Champaign County shows that 70% of the immigrants detained during the first six months of S-Comm are non-criminals.
- **S-Comm Fractures Families and Communities.** In addition to the distrust the program generates between immigrant communities and the police, S-Comm fractures and harms the stability of those communities and the families that compose them.
- **Implementation Problems Plague S-Comm in Champaign County.** Specifically, the report found that the 48-Hour limit on ICE holds has not been uniformly enforced; individuals arrested under S-Comm are being discouraged from posting bond; and the Sheriff’s office has been sending Consulate Forms to ICE which may violate international law.
- **S-Comm Causes more problems than it solves.** The report found that S-Comm wastes valuable tax dollars; encourages racial profiling; utilizes valuable capacity at the county jail and diverts law enforcement resources from fighting actual criminal activity.
- **S-Comm was implemented in Champaign County without any public notice or input.** The Champaign County Sheriff’s Office held no public hearings to explore the local impacts of the program or to solicit feedback from residents and taxpayers.

To correct these problems, the report offers a number of specific recommendations including:

- Suspend all immigration ‘holds’ especially for non-criminals.
- Establish a clear line of authority and improve documentation and flow of information.
- Detainees should not be discouraged to post bond by employees at the Sheriff’s Office.
- Return bond money if a detainee is never released.
- Stop sending “Consular Forms” to ICE as part of local procedure.
- Conduct an audit of the local costs of S-Comm.
- Conduct an independent evaluation of S-Comm in Champaign County.
- Institute reforms that would ensure greater transparency of S-Comm in Champaign County.
- Evaluate whether S-Comm violates local Sanctuary Ordinances.
- Adopt a countywide Sanctuary Ordinance.