



The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on Women and Families:

A Congressional Briefing

June 24, 2009

Eloy Detention Center



Key Concerns

- **Family separation**
- **Severe penal conditions for women who are not serving criminal sentences**
- **Inadequate access to telephones and legal materials**
- **Aggressive government prosecution and detention of women who pose no security threat or flight risk**

One former detainee's description of life in detention:

Those who wind up there, it is like a scar, a mark, that you're not going to erase, you're never going to erase. The person that winds up there... it's a serious nightmare. Now I'm outside and I still can't sleep. I have to convince myself that this is over, that I'm over it, I'm outside, but it's really hard, remembering what you lived through inside.



Family Separation

One attorney's comments:

What makes working with women particularly difficult, I think, is the fact that . . . they have the responsibility of their children who are left outside. Just worrying about them and wanting to be with them becomes their number one objective. Sometimes they are willing to forego forms of relief just to get deported so they can get out . . . and be able to be with their children. . . . Their needs are so different from men. All they want is their children. So it's very hard to work with them because they don't want to . . . hear "you have to be here four months fighting your case." They just say, "You know, I don't care about my case; I care about my kids."

Use of Shackles

“...Being expedited from California to Arizona was like the worst experience I’ve ever had. We were all shackled down and sitting on this airplane. They didn’t let us go to the restroom, we were stuck on the plane just sitting there, shackled. They didn’t let us use the restroom, they didn’t feed us at all, and we couldn’t get up until the next morning. It was just really tiring, you know? By the time I got to Eloy, I was in tears and I was like, “I can’t believe this!”

