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What happens to children after parents are detained and deported?

By Pepe Lozano

Imagine being separated from your children one day. You're put in a detention center hundreds of miles away with absolutely no right to see your kids for months, sometimes years, and the possibility of never seeing them again.

The heartbreaking stories are revealed in a new report by the Applied Research Center called *Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System*.

The opening paragraphs of the report's executive summary tell a grueling tale:

"Josephina's baby was just nine months old and Clara's children were one and six when they were placed in foster homes with strangers. Clara and Josephina, sisters in their early 30s who lived together in a small New Mexico town, had done nothing to harm their children or to elicit the attention of the child welfare department."

In the summer of 2010 federal immigration agents arrived at the door of the two mothers' trailer home, based on a tip that the sisters, who were undocumented, had drugs in their home. Though the ICE agents found nothing incriminating and even though the women had no criminal record, the officials called Child Protective Services to take custody of the children and the mothers were detained based on their immigration status.



The report continues, "For the four months that ICE detained them Josephina and Clara had no idea where their children were. In December, the sisters were deported, and their children remained in foster care."

Talking by phone from Mexico a year after she was deported, Josephina said, "I have no contact with my baby. I didn't do anything wrong to have my children taken away from me."

With the help of the Mexican consulate in New Mexico and after 14 months apart, Josephina and Clara were finally reunited with their children this September.

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Others may not be so lucky.

"Immigration enforcement greatly increases the chances that families will never see each other

And attorneys for the parents say they have little information about where their clients, the parents, are being detained.

again,” ARC President Rinku Sen said in a statement. “Detaining and deporting parents shatter families and endanger the children left behind. It’s unacceptable, un-American, and a clear sign that we need to revisit our immigration policies.”

Seth Freed Wessler, the report’s author and principal investigator, notes thousands of families are being left out of the decision-making process when it comes to the care and custody of their children. As a result, he says, children of detained and deported parents are likely to remain in foster care when they could be with their own family.

Wessler adds there are more than 5,000 children currently living in foster care whose parents have been either detained or deported. Families are facing formidable barriers to reunification, and in many cases will be permanently separated. If the numbers based on the report’s findings remain the same, he projects at least 15,000 more children will face similar threats to reunification in the next five years.

In fiscal year 2011, the U.S. deported nearly

400,000 people, a record-breaking number, and detained nearly that many. In the first six months of 2011, the Obama administration removed more than 46,000 mothers and fathers of U.S.-citizen children.

The child welfare system moves forward without the parents, mostly because the detention centers do not cooperate. And attorneys for the parents say they have little information about where their clients, the parents, are being detained.

“These detention policies need to change and we need community-based alternatives so families can stay united,” he said.

Controversial programs such as Secure Communities and 287(g), enforced by state and local law enforcement, need to be suspended, says Wessler. States, counties and municipalities that enforce them are one of the major causes of separated families and children being put in the foster care system, he said.



Pepe Lozano writes for the People’s World.

Poverty is up, corporate taxes are down

By PW Editorial Board

As the deadline for the Senate super committee draws nearer two new studies highlight what’s at stake. First new census data shows that 20 million people now live in deep poverty - a record 35-year high. This means that one in 15 Americans struggle for the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, water.

Thirty Fortune 500 corporations paid no taxes for the past three years. 280 of the most profitable corporations, shelter half of all their profits.

“Deep poverty” is defined as living at 50 percent of the poverty level. Workers living in deep poverty have “an income of \$5,570 or less for an individual and \$11,157 for a family of four.” This amounts to half of the 46 million living below the poverty line.

The growth of poverty extends far and wide, leaving no sections of the country unscathed. Not only are traditional inner-city neighborhoods and rural areas affected - but also increasingly suburban communities. “As a whole, the number of poor in the suburbs who lived in high-poverty neighborhoods rose by 41 percent since 2000, more than double the growth of such city neighborhoods” writes AP.

Today the crisis presents new demographic twists: “As concentrated poverty spreads to new

areas, including suburbs, the residents are now more likely to be white, native-born and high school or college graduates - not the conventional image of high-school dropouts or single mothers in inner-city ghettos.”

Many now in crisis may never be able to dig themselves out of hole the capitalist economy has put them in.

In the midst of this ever-growing misery, however, corporate America, protected by loopholes and tax codes that favor the super wealthy is doing just fine. 280 companies that sheltered half their profits “faced federal income tax bills equal to 18.5 percent of their profits during the last three years - little more than half the official corporate rate of 35 percent and lower than their competitors in many industrialized countries.”

Only two roads are possible: either tax the rich to provide short-term stimulus and jobs so that the economy can recover or cut vital lifelines to the ever growing poor.

It is this callous and arrogant disregard for growing inequality in the face of corporate profiteering that is fueling the Occupy Movement.

Only the high road of mass democratic struggle and pressure combined with legislative action can force Congress to act.

Thirty Fortune 500 corporations paid no taxes for the past three years.

Environmental assault disguised as border security

By Scott Nicol

How does waiving the Endangered Species Act in Glacier National Park help secure the border? Simple. It doesn't.

But that doesn't matter to Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah, author of the National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act (HR 1505). Bishop claims that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which includes the U.S. Border Patrol, cannot enforce immigration laws without violating the rest of our nation's laws, so his bill waives 36 important laws on federal lands within 100 miles of the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders for anything that CBP may want to do, from carving roads through wilderness areas to building Border Patrol bases in national parks to erecting walls.

Most of the laws that HR 1505 tosses aside, including the Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, protect the environment. But the bill also waives laws like the Farmland Policy Protection Act and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Bishop's bill is an expansion of the Real ID Act, a Bush era policy intended to address federal ID card standards and certain aspects of immigration law. Tucked into Real ID's overarching language was Section 102, which gave the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to waive local, state and federal laws to build walls along the southern border.

The existing Real ID Act waivers have paved the way for tremendous environmental damage. To build border walls in California's Otay Mountain Wilderness Area, 530,000 cubic yards of rock were blasted from mountainsides; walls have caused serious flooding in Arizona's Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument; and walls fragment the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, which was established for the preservation of ocelots, an endangered feline.



Without the waivers, those walls would be illegal.

Would complying with our nation's laws really prevent CBP from securing our borders?

Not according to the Border Patrol.

The irony is that the Border Patrol has not asked for the power to ignore environmental laws, but instead has sent officials to testify against Bishop's bill in Congress.

Bishop's targeting of environmental laws simply fits the current Republican zeitgeist. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor has attacked environmental regulations and the Environmental Protection Agency as "obstacles to economic growth" that must be "removed," and Mitt Romney says the Clean Air Act should be rewritten to exclude the regulation of greenhouse gasses.

Environmental laws have nothing to do with our economic crisis, but the bad economy provides cover for efforts to repeal or rewrite them.

The National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act is just more of the same.

Bishop's bill isn't really about protecting our borders. It is an assault on federal lands and environmental laws that uses border security as a convenient Trojan horse.

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Border Occupy: deadlines, police violence, solidarity

By Owen Williamson

Now into its fifth week, the Occupy El Paso movement in west Texas is facing a classic high-noon showdown. On Thursday police visited the site of the Occupation in the city's central San Jacinto Plaza and warned occupiers to vacate by midday on Nov. 13 or risk forcible eviction and arrest. Local activists are already holding training sessions on nonviolent resistance tactics and calling for local volunteers for civil disobedience if authorities try to evict the group by force.

Occupy El Paso is currently operating legally under a City Council permit that allows the group to stay in the plaza 24 hours a day until the Nov. 13 deadline. However, city officials and law enforcement have prohibited occupiers from pitching tents, and at one point harassed activists by ordering all tents to be taken down during the daytime, supposedly to protect the grass. However, when demonstrators refused to comply, the police chose not to seek confrontation.

The mid-November deadline was supposedly timed to allow the city to two weeks to put up holiday decorations at the plaza in time for the annual post-Thanksgiving official lighting ceremony.

El Paso protesters have received strong support from local labor unions, including the Border Farmworkers Union, who held a march of support last week from their union hall to the Plaza. El Centro Mayapan, a Latino cultural center in El Paso, has also offered its full moral and material support to the mainly-Anglo occupiers.

Meanwhile, occupiers in the nearby city of Las Cruces, N.M., were ordered to purchase prohibitively expensive \$12 per-night-per-tent camping permits if they wished to remain on city park property, and city officials warned that evictions would begin.

La pobreza crece, disminuyen impuestos a corporaciones

Por Mesa editorial

Mientras más se acerque la fecha señalada para el reporte de la Supercomisión del Senado, dos nuevos estudios han hecho claro todo lo que queda en juego. Primero, indican nuevos datos del censo que en este país algunos 20 millones personas ya viven en miseria profunda, iuna marca que no ha sido superado deste hace 35 años! Lo que significa esto es que uno en 15 estadounidenses lucha por las necesidades de la vida: alimento, ropa, y vivienda.

Entretanto, según Citizens for Tax Justice [Ciudadanos por la Justicia Tributaria], 30 corporaciones entre las Fortune 500 [las mayores compañías norteamericanas] no pagaron ningún centavo de impuestos durante los tres años pasados. Además, 280 de las corporaciones más rentables abrigan la mitad de todas sus ganancias del impuesto sobre los beneficios.

“Miseria profunda” quiere decir vivir al 50 por ciento del mínimo vital. Los obreros que viven en miseria profunda tienen “un ingreso de \$5.570 o menos para una sola persona y \$11.157 para una familia de cuatro.” El crecimiento de miseria se extiende por todas partes y no deja sin afectarse a ninguna sección del país. Ya no sólo los barrios céntricos y las zonas rurales sino también los barrios exteriores son afectados. “En todo, el número de los pobres suburbanos que viven en barrios de alta pobreza creció por 41 por ciento hace el año 2000, más que lo doble del crecimiento de tales barrios en las ciudades.”

La miseria concentrada hasta nuevas zonas, incluyendo los suburbios exteriores, los vecinos son ahora probablemente blancos, naturales de

EEUU y estudiantes o bachilleres y no conformen a la imagen convencional de personas que han abandonado la escuela o de madres solteras en barrios céntricos.”

Puede ser que muchas personas que están actualmente en peligro no puedan sacarse del aprieto que les hizo la economía capitalista.

En medio de esta miseria siempre creciente las corporaciones estadounidenses, protegidas por rendijas y códigos tributarios que favorecen a los superricos, andan mucho muy bien, gracias. Escribe el New York Times que las 280 compañías que abrigaron la mitad de sus ganancias “pagaban impuestos federales iguales al 18,5 por ciento de sus beneficios durante los tres años pasados, un poco más que la mitad del nivel oficial de impuestos de 35 por ciento y más bajos que los de sus competidores en muchos países industrializados”.

El crecimiento de la pobreza a lado de la negativa de las grandes corporaciones de pagar impuestos es una advertencia severa de las opciones legislativas que ya están ante la Supercomisión. Hay solamente dos caminos posibles: o imponer contribuciones a los ricos para proveer estímulo inmediato y trabajos para que la economía pueda recuperarse, o recortar servicios vitales a la población siempre creciente de pobres.

Está provocando el movimiento de los indignados esta indiferencia arrogante a la desigualdad en el descaro de las ganancias excesivas de las corporaciones.

Solamente el camino honorable de lucha democrática de masas y presión popular junto con la acción legislativa puede forzar el Congreso a tomar acción.