



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2005

CONTACT: press@ufcw.org

SAFETY SCAM THREATENS WORKERS LIVES

Immigration Officers Pose as Workplace Safety Officials to Entrap Immigrant Workers

WASHINGTON, DC. —The segment of the American workforce most likely to suffer injury or death on the job was targeted in scam operation by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. ICE officers paraded as safety instructors to round up undocumented construction workers in North Carolina, luring 48 workers into arrest, earlier this month, with a flier announcing a mandatory Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) meeting.

“OSHA is responsible for worker safety and health,” said UFCW International President Joe Hansen. “For ICE to stage a sham OSHA meeting in order to round up and arrest people undermines OSHA’s mission, and is a step backwards for state and federal efforts to reduce worker injuries and death. Furthermore, that kind of action minimizes OSHA’s ability to do the critical work of protecting America’s labor force.”

There are more than 10 million foreign-born workers in the US, making up about nearly 15% of the workforce. Immigrant workers have the highest rates of on-the-job injuries and fatalities. **Hispanic workers suffer 69% of all on-the-job injuries/deaths.** In the meatpacking industry, more than half of the workers are foreign-born, and in some plants, up to 80% of the workers are immigrants.

“This unscrupulous action has shattered the trust between OSHA and the workers who depend on the agency the most,” said Hansen. “More and more often, it is immigrants who work in the most dangerous industries such as construction or meatpacking. How can OSHA reach these at-risk workers with safety information now? To these workers, OSHA no longer means safety, but betrayal.”

The Bush administration must denounce the kind of trickery that undermines safety on the job.

--30--

For more information: Greg Denier 202 466 1591