

Dangerous Alien Criminals Prey on American Communities

BY REP. BOB GOODLATTE (R-VA)

The following remarks were delivered before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security of the House Committee on the Judiciary, April 19, 2016.

I want to especially thank our witnesses for appearing today and for your willingness to testify before this subcommittee on this very important issue.

I also want to express my deepest sympathy to the family members of Sarah Root and Joshua Wilkerson, who were tragically killed by criminal aliens illegally present in the United States. Their mothers, Michelle Root and Laura Wilkerson, are here to share their stories under heartbreaking circumstances that no parent could be prepared for or should have to bear.

Sarah Root was killed by an unlawful alien drunk driver less than three months ago. Only hours before her death, she graduated from college with a 4.0 average and a degree in investigations.

Tragically, the Department of Homeland Security did not consider her killer an enforcement priority and did not issue a detainer for his arrest. As a result, he posted a state bail bond and fled.

Joshua Wilkerson was tortured and murdered in 2010 by an alien who had overstayed his visa for eight years. The killer was arrested on a harassment charge only months before. But ICE did not seek to take custody of him.

The district attorney who prosecuted the murder case couldn't explain why ICE did not have an interest in him despite the fact that ICE regularly reviewed the county jail roster.

Though these two young victims had unique life stories, their tragic deaths are linked by a common thread. They are two of the many innocent victims of the irresponsible policies of the Obama Administration

that promote the presence of dangerous criminal aliens in American communities.

The American public has been misled by the enforcement priorities, deferred action, and executive action policies of this administration, which categorize only certain quote/unquote "serious criminal aliens" as worthy of immigration enforcement.

However, this administration's actions demonstrate that it finds it acceptable to permit even serious criminal aliens to prey on our communities. The fact remains that illegal immigration has consequences. It is not a victimless crime.

And for the families and friends of victims killed, maimed, or otherwise hurt by aliens, especially those who are illegally present, the consequence, can be devastating.

The White House website proclaims the president's highest priority is to keep the American people safe. The president echoed that sentiment in his recent State of the Union address.

Americans wonder how that reassuring statement can be true if this administration's current policies require criminal aliens apprehended at the border and in our neighborhoods to simply be released to victimize others.

Americans deserve to know why this administration would release thousands upon thousands of criminal aliens from DHS custody, despite convictions that included a total of 473 homicide-related offenses, 375 kidnappings, 890 sexual assaults, and 10,731 assaults, before their release.

And after their release from DHS custody, criminal aliens went on to commit 124 homicide-related offenses between 2010 and 2014. Those released in 2014 alone committed 1,423 additional crimes after their release from custody, including vehicular homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

At least 95 percent of convicted criminal aliens known to DHS are not detained. How does that policy protect the American people? The harm is real and the risk is great. Yet, the consequences are largely avoidable

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if this administration were to simply enforce the law.

That is why, last year, the Judiciary Committee passed H.R. 1148, the Michael Davis, Jr., and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act, legislation introduced by Chairman Gowdy, which provides much needed enforcement tools for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law and protect the public from criminal aliens.

The administration’s irresponsible policies have led to an increase in organized crime by aliens. Violent crime by Central American street gangs, such as MS-13, has become endemic in our communities.

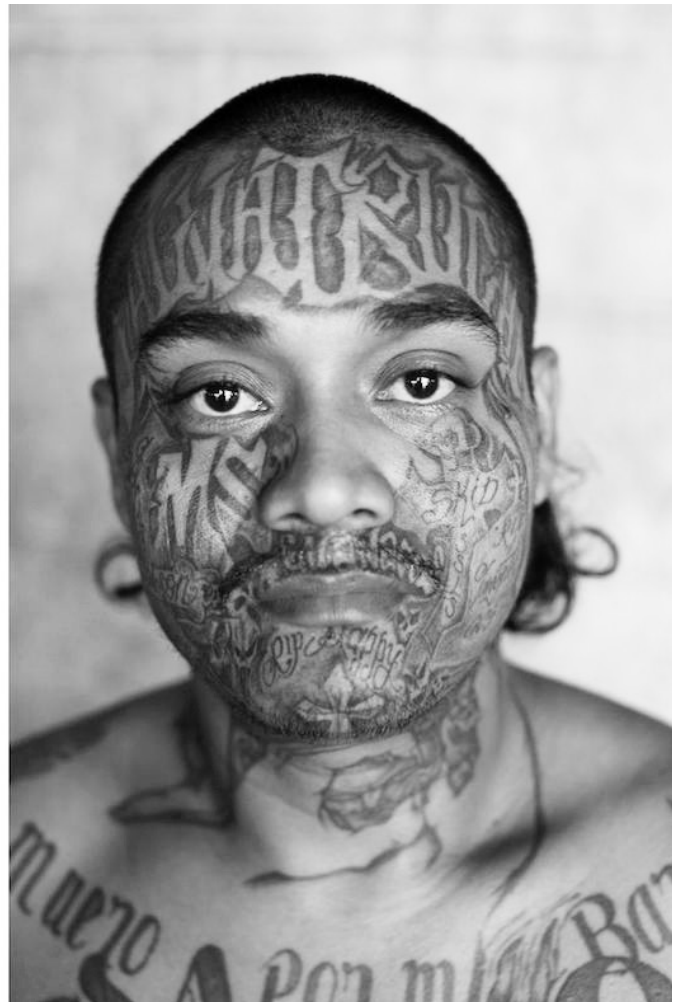
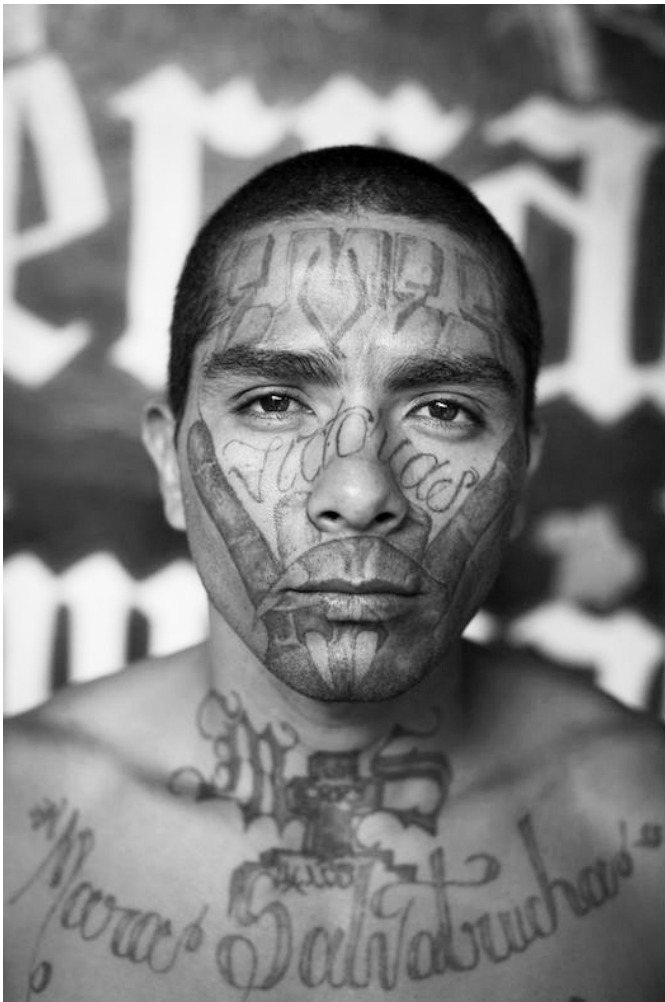
Sheriff Charles Jenkins of Frederick County, Maryland, will testify today. He is all too familiar with the increase in alien gang violence. His rural county, just 50 miles from this building, has seen a significant increase in major crimes by MS-13 gang members.

Alien gang crime in Frederick County increased

sharply beginning in 2014 and nearly three-quarters of the offenses were for violent felonies. It is no coincidence that the spike in gang crime occurred during the same time that thousands of Central American minors were illegally entering at the southwest border.

Sixty-four percent of validated gang members arrested in Frederick County in 2015 entered illegally through the southwest border as unaccompanied minors. By releasing known criminal aliens and refusing to secure our border, the administration has sent a clear message to the American people that their safety and security are far less important than ensuring that illegally present and criminal aliens will remain here.

Today, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses whose compelling and insightful testimony will provide this subcommittee with a greater understanding of the public safety threat posed by criminal aliens and the tragic consequences of refusing to enforce our immigration laws. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. ■



Rep. Goodlatte: “Sixty-four percent of validated gang members arrested in Frederick County [Maryland] in 2015 entered illegally through the southwest border as unaccompanied minors. By releasing known criminal aliens and refusing to secure our border, the administration has sent a clear message to the American people that their safety and security are far less important than ensuring that illegally present and criminal aliens will remain here.”