

# Two Moms Lose a Daughter..

*Drunk driver tragically ends the life of recent Bellevue University graduate;*

*Michelle Root, Sarah Root's mother; Laura Wilkerson, Joshua Wilkerson's mother; and Center for Immigration Studies staffer Jessica Vaughn testified before congressional hearings on border security and illegal alien violence.*

**M**ICHELLE ROOT: I would just like to thank Chairman Gowdy, Chairman Goodlatte, and the respected members of this committee. Thank you for inviting me to speak of Sarah. On my — behalf of my family and myself, we'd also like to thank the Omaha Police Department for doing the job that they did in catching Sarah's murderer. But, unfortunately, they were unable to detain him.

Sarah was my only daughter. She was 21. She had just graduated from Bellevue University with a 4.0. She inspired to go on to get her Master's in criminal investigations. However, that was cut short for her.

The night of January 31, 2016, as she was coming home, she was rear-ended by Eswin Mejia, who is 19 years old, here illegally, drunk driving, street racing. My daughter died instantly. However, she was an organ donor, so she was kept alive until February — I believe it was the fourth. Days are run together.

My daughter was a productive child. She did not deserve to end this tragically. I'm sorry. It's just devastating that the laws that we have in place weren't carried out.

The local law enforcement did their job. They detained him. Went to ICE. Tried to get a hold on him. ICE refused. I don't know why that was, with everything that happened, but he is on the loose now. So our family does not have closure. We probably never will have closure, even if he is found. I just hope that he will be some day found to pay for the crime that he did against my daughter.

We are not against immigration. Sarah's grandmother was an immigrant from Vienna, Austria. She did it legally. She did it the right way. That's all we're asking.

It's the illegal immigrants that are already breaking the law once they come over here and they continue to break our laws and not following them. This is not iso-

lated incidents. This is happening all the time.

Since we've been in D.C., we've gotten reports that another Honduran illegal immigrant has hit and killed somebody else in Omaha, Nebraska. Her stories — there are thousands of our stories out there. Something needs to be done.

The arrest and conviction of Eswin will not bring Sarah back. But it will give our family some closure and knowledge that justice has prevailed. Despite all the tragedy, Sarah still is the hero in this story. She was, again, an organ donor.

We are a nation of legal immigrants. My family, like many other Americans, hold no ill will to people who desire the American dream. Sarah, an American cit-



**Drunk driver Eswin Mejia and fatal victim Sarah Root**

izen, desired that same dream. But it was taken from her.

We urge the members of Congress to support meaningful immigration reform through the support in passing of legislation such as Kate's Law, the Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act, and the Davis-Oliver Act that empowers local governments and law enforcement and forces ICE to take an illegal immigrant into custody when requested by local law enforcement.

Eswin spent four days in jail and is believed to have [fled] the country. He posted \$5,000 bond, which was less than the cost it was to bury my daughter, Sarah. Because of the lack of controls, the police, immigration,

# and Son to Violent Alien Acts

*high school senior systematically tortured to death in sadistic, grisly beating*

U.S. Marshals, and law enforcement have, little or no information on his whereabouts, or on him or his families, has been found.

[Eswin] was not a stranger to the law enforcement and failed to honor his legal obligation for minor traffic infractions prior to killing my daughter. Now, a failed local judicial system that set his bond too low, coupled with the flawed Obama Administration policies, have rewarded the illegal and punished my family and hampered law enforcement in their investigations.

I just want to thank you again for letting me speak on my daughter’s behalf and let Sarah’s voice be heard. Thank you. ■

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**L**AURA WILKERSON: Thank you for allowing me to share my story today. Thank you for everyone that invited me here. My name is Laura Wilkerson, and my family became the victim of illegal alien crime on November 16, 2010.

This was our family’s attack by a foreign invader whom is in this country illegally. At best guess, his family are still enjoying the fruits of America at the hands of taxpayers. I don’t know this as fact, because this United States government does not know it as fact. You — you don’t know.

My youngest son, Joshua, was a senior in high school and had his whole life ahead of him. He went to school and never returned. He — as Josh walked up to the doors of the school that morning, Hermilo Morales walked up as well. There’s a video that I saw in trial. This is the last picture of Josh alive.

This killer asked Josh for a ride home. And in the video you can see Josh shaking his head, yeah. And then Josh went inside the building and turned around and held the door open for Mr. Morales to walk in.

He said something to Josh and Josh went — which we later found out he wasn’t going to school. So Josh just closed the door — allowed the door to close and walks out of the frame, headed to class. Last time I’ll ever see my son walk, talk, anything about him.

At trial, the killer testified on his behalf and gave

exact testimony on how he systematically killed Joshua. He first — and this is from the killer on the witness stand. He first threw a punch in the face so that Joshua’s vision was messed up and he could not fight back.

He next kneed Joshua in the abdomen so that he would go to the ground. Josh went to ground, as his spleen was sliced in half. The killer was aggravated that it was not over yet. He was a black belt in mixed martial arts and thought he could do this without any blood.

He was aggravated it was not over. He said he grew tired of watching bloody bubbles come from Joshua’s nose as he was trying to breathe. Next, he took a closet rod and beat Josh over the head again and again until the rod broke in four pieces. Josh was still breathing.

Next, he strangled him. Let him go to see if it was over. No, it’s not over. So he continued until there were no more bloody bubbles. He must have said it six times from the stand. As a mom, I realize that my kid was grasping for air. He waited, and he watched him die.

He tied Josh’s body up, stuffed it in the back seat of our truck, bought gas, dumped Josh in a field and set his body on fire. The killer went home, took a shower and went to see a movie, had popcorn and Coke.

I testified last — before the Senate last July, in 2015, and told this story. Nothing has been done about it. We can have hearing after hearing after hearing. Until there is action, we’re just talking.

The 11 million figure that you spoke about a while ago, it just — it just saddens me because that figure was thrown around from the very beginning of Joshua. Well, I know that her child has died.

So that’s one more. Kate Steinle has died. There were two this weekend that died from street racing — from an illegal — in Houston this weekend, a pastor and his wife, married 30 years. So you need to keep that number — you don’t know that number. Nobody knows that number. I’ve been to the border. I’ve watched them walk across. And you’re not counting them.

So that number is from, maybe, people who are seeking welfare or who’re getting benefits from the government. Otherwise, you don’t know how many people are here. That number just — it aggravates me.

Because this government has no clue who is here

or what their intent is in being here, I see this American government scrambling over themselves to pretend to care about American families. And instead you give away every bit of America to people whom have broken our laws on how to — to enter this country. Then on to break other laws.

Not to — now to having sanctuary cities teaching them how to grab a piece of America, unlawfully and at the expense of American families. I'm stunned. I'm shocked. I'm saddened that we're even having this discussion. When are you going to act on it? When are you going to do something about it?

Rather than let's just talk about it and put a video up on your next election — on your website, as if you're doing something about it. It's time to move. Her — her kid wouldn't be gone if we had moved last year when I testified before the Senate. Sarah would still be here.

You have to enforce the laws. I — I watched the Sunday morning news this weekend and over and over and over — follow the rules, follow the rules. And we're talking about the election and some of the way it went in — in Colorado. Follow the rules.

Follow the laws. You know, as this sweet lady who's an immigration attorney — I would think she'd have to follow the laws, legally. This has nothing to do with people in this country that came here through the front door. This has everything to do with people who snuck in this country and continue to take from America,

including our children.

You know, when they mention the bad acts of some — the bad acts of some, if they took your child you would think of it totally different. I realize you don't hear this every day, but it happens every day whether you want to know it or not. And the media doesn't report it. I know it. You know it. Everybody in this room knows it. They report what they want to report.

And you talked about fear. You know that illegals are afraid to come out of the shadows. You know, you want to know what fear is? You know, when somebody reaches in your house and grabs your littlest kid and tortures them. You're afraid of everything for a long time. I could care less about the fear that they put themselves in here.

I didn't bring my kid across that border. If — if I would have told my daughter I'm going to Mexico. And had a man — you know, he'll bring you over here in a year or two. I'd — I'd be charged with neglect, as well as I should be. I did not put my kid into harm's way when he went to school that day. You did.

Every one of you is elected by an American. It is time for you to stand in the gap for Americans. I'm so tired of being up here and — and — and going over the same thing. You're elected by Americans. Do something. It is your job. Every one of you are in a position to do something that we are not.

You need — if you — if you've been in bed with



Joshua Wilkerson's mom Laura Wilkerson (above) has testified before two congressional hearings on illegal alien violence.

somebody who's giving you too much money and you think the wrong way, get out of the way and let someone get in here that can care about Americans and their families. This is not about love. I do not have any hate.

Two days after Christmas, when — after he killed Josh, I went and forgave this kid at the jail — totally forgiven. He's off my mind. It is now — they asked me at the trial, you know, what did I want to give him. And I — and all I could say was that it's not my call to decide his life. It's not.

They couldn't believe I said it. The jury — you know, it's the jury's call. I didn't want to be anything like him and — and hurt another person. It's time to do something. I did not — we did not put our kids in

jeopardy. We did not decide to, you know, traipse them across the desert.

There is no — there are no minors that came here by themselves. I know it and you know it. There are no minors unless they're 16-year-old guys or girls that come here. The minors can't come here by themselves. I've seen the border people die every day trying to get here.

America's invited them and I — you've got to do something. It is just time to do something about this. The thing that you can do is enforce laws. How do you pick and choose a law? I don't understand it. How you pick and choose a law. You know, the laws are here to be enforced by who? By you. And they're not being enforced and my kid suffered terribly for it. Thanks. ■

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JESSICA VAUGHN: Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on the public safety problems created when local governments adopt policies that obstruct immigration enforcement. Commonly known as Sanctuary Policies.

According to an ICE report that I obtained through a FOIA request, as of October 2014, there were 276 such jurisdictions in the United States. Over an eight-month period, in 2014, more than 8,100 criminal aliens, who were the subject of detainers, were instead released back into the streets as a result of these non-cooperation policies.

Approximately two-thirds of these individuals already had serious criminal history, as defined by ICE at the time of their release. Nearly 1,900 of them subsequently re-offended just in that eight-month period. Only 28 percent of them have been re-apprehended by ICE.

Now, I've just reeled off a lot of statistics that I know sometimes make some people's eyes glaze over, but as someone who also has lost a close family member — my brother — because of a negligent act by a sworn law enforcement officer and also a bad policy. And I should add that the offense that was committed was one that some on this committee would call a minor traffic offense that killed my brother.

I have to say that it is really not okay to refer to these tragedies as a little thing. As one member of this committee has. I have a friend, her name is Heather, a few years ago she was carjacked at knife point and taken to Roger Williams Park in Providence, Rhode Island and raped repeatedly by an illegal alien who had been in the custody of the Providence Police Department more than once, but was released because of then Mayor Cicilline's sanctuary policy. This was not a "little thing." I have other friends, some in this room, who can tell similar stories. And I'm afraid that Congress is about to try to get away with doing just a "little thing" just by barring fund-

ing from these sanctuary jurisdictions, some funding.

And I'm asking you today to not be satisfied with just doing a "little thing." This big problem requires you to have the courage to do a bigger thing. You have the language in the Davis-Oliver Act. Please do this for these families who have lost so much.

Sanctuary policies do nothing to build trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement. They do not improve access to law enforcement services for immigrants, nor have they been shown to increase the likelihood that more crime victims will report crime.

On the contrary, they destroy the trust of the community at large, that the laws will be faithfully enforced to preserve the quality of life for all. Despite the widespread public outrage at the San Francisco Sheriff's policies that caused the release of a man who went on to kill Katherine Steinle, it is clear that some jurisdictions will not budge from their criminal alien sanctuary policies.

To make matters worse, the Obama Administration's new Priority Enforcement Program explicitly allows local jurisdictions to obstruct ICE and also establishes the entire country as a sanctuary for nearly all illegal aliens by further narrowing enforcement priorities and severely restricting the ability of ICE officers to deport removable aliens, including many with criminal records.

Therefore, Congress must step in to correct the situation by clarifying in the law that local law enforcement agencies are expected to comply with ICE detainers, establishing that local law enforcement agencies will have qualified immunity when cooperating in good faith, by implementing sanctions for those sanctuary jurisdictions that continue to refuse to cooperate, and by reversing the Obama Administration's non-enforcement policies. Thank you very much. ■