

Utah vigilante group releases undocumented immigrant hit list

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In an attempt to ignite a witch-hunt, an anonymous vigilante group in Utah has begun circulating a list among media outlets, law enforcement, state, and federal agencies containing the names of 1,300 alleged undocumented immigrants. Personal information such as birthdates, Social Security numbers, workplaces, addresses, phone numbers, names of children and due dates of pregnant women are included for many of the names on the list.

The group, calling themselves “Concerned Citizens of the United States,” originally sent the list to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in April 2010, but they claim they “have not observed any action.” An enclosed letter, addressed to ICE and dated April 4, indicated that the anonymous group had used “legal Mexican nationals” to infiltrate the social networks of Hispanics in order to obtain the information included in the list.

An attached cover letter called for those on the list to be “deported immediately,” along with the message:

“To the elected officials, we would ask that you remember who you work for in this country—you work for America and for the citizens in the State of Utah. You DO NOT work for illegal immigrants who have come into our country illegally and now take advantage of our system. To the media—we would ask that you show the public the names and numbers and ask the question—how much are they costing the taxpayers to continue to support their existence in this country and in this state.”

Following the lead of reactionary politicians in Arizona and around the country, the group continues to propagate the lie that immigrants are responsible for the degradation of living standards of American workers.

Local Utah news radio outlet KSL contacted several of the people appearing on the list. One woman, who did not want to be identified, told KSL, “I have my papers! Why did they put me on that list? Now, it’s been 15 years since I got my residency.” The woman said she came to the

United States in 1984, she has had a green card for more than a decade, and will become a citizen next month.

Another individual, who was named by KSL but will remain anonymous here, admitted that he in fact was undocumented, and had been brought to the United States at the age of 10 by his parents. The individual expressed fear that his family could be torn apart by deportations, and that although he has worked hard to learn English, graduate high school, and get a job, this may all be taken away from him.

The Associated Press spoke with Tony Yapias, former director of the Utah Office of Hispanic Affairs, who said that he has been contacted by many of the members of the Hispanic community in Utah, all scared for their safety and that of their families. “My phone has been ringing nonstop since this morning with people finding out they’re on the list,” he said. “They’re feeling terrorized. They’re very scared.”

Co-chair of the anti-immigrant Utah Minuteman Project, Eli Cawley, justified the list, telling KSL, “It’s probably against some privacy laws...but I think in the interest of preserving our civilization, preserving our society and protecting the people of the state of Utah, I think that’s a greater interest than protecting the privacy of some individuals.”

The *Salt Lake City Weekly* reported that the Utah Minuteman Project founder has denied responsibility for compiling and distributing the list, despite the fact the *City Weekly* reported in July 2009 that members had discussed a plan to recruit sympathetic company insiders to give them personal information about undocumented workers.

The appearance of the list in Utah has not come out of the blue. The Utah Minuteman Project has been very active in the recent past, inciting anti-immigrant sentiment in supporting anti-immigration legislation in 2008-2009.

Utah State politicians have also done their share to

incite vigilante groups. State Representative Stephen Sandstrom, a Republican, has begun plans to introduce legislation similar to the SB 1070 immigration law passed in Arizona. After the US Justice Department announced its lawsuit against Arizona's immigration law, Sandstrom indicated he would carry on with plans to introduce this legislation in Utah and announced that he would like to join other legislators in filing a brief supporting the legality of the Arizona law. Sandstrom has also appeared at rallies in Arizona in support of SB 1070.

US Senator Orrin Hatch, Republican of Utah, frequently parrots many of the myths being used to promote SB 1070, demonizing immigrants in the process. Hatch recently told KSL, "[In Arizona]...criminals are coming into the state...they're bringing drugs right and left into the country, they're trampling all over Arizona's beautiful lands and wilderness areas. The state's had enough of it."

While the anonymous Utah vigilantes claim, "We are not violent nor do we support violence," it is clear that the circulation of this list puts those included on it, as well as their families, in tremendous personal danger. Certain elements within vigilante organizations such as the Minute Men have been known to use violence against their targets. (See: "Anti-immigrant activist on trial for murder in Arizona")

The vilification of immigrants by many in the Republican Party, in order to lay the blame for the current economic crisis at their feet, will ultimately lead to violent reactions from right-wing groups like that responsible for the distribution of this hit list in Utah.

The Democratic Party has no intention, nor desire, to mount a defense of immigrant workers. Calls by Obama and the Democrats for "immigration reform" amount to nothing more than reactionary policies aimed at attacking the democratic rights of all, and keeping immigrant workers segregated as a super-exploited section of the workforce.



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