

Obama administration to continue mass deportations of immigrants

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On a televised interview at the White House on Tuesday with Telemundo, a Spanish language network, President Obama stated that he does not have the power to halt the deportation of undocumented immigrants, now estimated to total more than 1,000 per day. Suggesting that his hands were tied, Obama said that halting the deportations would be a violation of federal law.

His comment expresses the rightward shift of the Democratic Party, which has accelerated deportations since Obama took office. The administration is now attempting to push through Congress an immigration bill that will completely militarize the entire US-Mexico border.

Last year, Obama announced that his administration would not deport young people who were brought to this country as children, and would begin to employ “prosecutorial discretion,” focusing on deporting those with a criminal record.

This decision was aimed only at boosting Obama’s 2012 reelection campaign. The Democrats never once seriously addressed the fundamental issue of democratic rights for undocumented workers and their families.

During the Univision interview, Obama said that expanding the deferment beyond young people is “not an option” and in doing so, “would be ignoring the law in a way that would be very difficult to defend.”

The former constitutional law professor has expressed no similar qualms about massive illegal spying by the National Security Agency or numerous assassinations by drone-fired missiles ordered by the White House.

His remarks during the interview have drawn a considerable backlash from immigration advocates, as many voted for Obama during his reelection and have attempted to pressure Obama into pushing for a more

generous immigration reform bill.

Pablo Alvarado, executive director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, highlights the administration anti-immigration policies, “Unless the president alters course, he risks cementing his legacy as having presided over the most anti-immigration administration in history.”

Expressing their discontent with the administration, seven workers associated with Alvarado’s organization handcuffed themselves to the White House Wednesday morning. They were later arrested and fined for disobeying a lawful order.

Obama’s interview came only days after the House Republicans refused to vote on a Senate-approved immigration bill, officially titled the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” which would include a 13-year path for citizenship for most undocumented workers living in the United States. Individuals who will apply for citizenship will have to satisfy a host of anti-democratic requirements during the process.

Immigration advocates have criticized the Republicans, while at the same time ignoring the role of the Democratic Party. Jaime Contreras, vice president of Service Employees International Union, is one of these figures: “A handful of extremists in the House of Representatives wants to stop anything progressive, anything that means something to the working people, including a path to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants.”

Such comments use the bigoted and reactionary politics of the Republican Party to provide a cover for the Democrats, while ignoring the complete undemocratic measures of the Obama administration. Both US ruling parties represent big businesses and the financial elite and are viciously hostile to the working

class, both native-born and immigrant.

In the president's first term, the Obama administration set a new record of 1.5 million deportations. At the current rate of 1,000 deportations per day, Obama will greatly surpass the 2 million deportations during the two terms of the George W. Bush administration.

The immigration bill will greatly increase the repressive and surveillance capacities of the state, militarize the entire US-Mexico border zone, in what senators have described as a "border surge," and create a new category of second-class citizens.

The bill appropriates \$46 billion for border enforcement, under conditions where the Immigration and Customs Enforcement is already the largest federal police agency. "Persistent surveillance" will cover 100 percent of the southern border, with unmanned aerial drones deployed on a 24/7 basis.

It will also universalize the E-Verify system, a massive information reservoir operated by the Department of Homeland Security, while establishing a guest worker program to provide cheap labor to large corporations and agribusiness interests.



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