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DHS Announces Launch of new Office for Victims of Illegal Immigrant Crime

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Office built with input from victims impacted by crime

WASHINGTON – Today, Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly announced the official launch of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement Office (VOICE). The VOICE office will assist victims of crimes committed by criminal aliens.

ICE built the VOICE office in response to the Executive Order entitled *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States*, which directed DHS to create an office to support victims of crimes committed by criminal aliens.

“All crime is terrible, but these victims are unique—and too often ignored,” said Secretary Kelly. “They are casualties of crimes that should never have taken place—because the people who

victimized them often times should not have been in the country in the first place.

The key objectives of the VOICE office are:

- Use a victim-centered approach to acknowledge and support victims and their families.
- Promote awareness of available services to crime victims.
- Build collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders assisting victims.

ICE has established a toll-free hotline staffed with operators who will triage calls to ensure victims receive the support they need. The number is 1-855-48-VOICE or 1-855-488-6423.

The types of assistance people impacted by crimes committed by illegal aliens can expect include:

- Local contacts to help with unique victim requests
 - ICE community relations officers will serve as a local representative explaining to victims what information is available and to help victims understand the immigration enforcement and removal process.
- Access to social service professionals able to refer victims to resources and service providers
 - ICE has a cadre of 27 victim assistance specialists located across the country available to direct victims to a wide range of resources. The victim assistance specialists possess a high degree of specialized victim assistance expertise and training.
- Assistance signing-up to receive automated custody status information
 - The DHS-Victim Information and Notification Exchange (DHS-VINE) is an automated service being

launched today that will help victims track the immigration custody status of illegal alien perpetrators of crime. More information about DHS-VINE and how to sign-up to receive automated alerts can be found at: <https://vinelink.dhs.gov> (<https://vinelink.dhs.gov>).

- Additional criminal or immigration history may be available about an illegal alien to victims or their families
 - ICE will work with requesting individuals to determine what releasable information is available to victims about an alien involved in a crime.

ICE is employing a measured approach to building the VOICE office—meaning that it intends to expand the services VOICE offers in the future. This approach allows the office to provide immediate services to victims, but will also allow the agency to collect metrics and information to determine additional resource needs and how the office can best serve victims and their families moving forward.

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