

Pelosi on 'un-American' immigration law

by Debra_J_Saunders

At a recent San Francisco event, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi denounced the Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests of illegal immigrants. "Taking parents from their children â€¦ that's un-American," Pelosi said.

Fox News aired videotape of Pelosi's "un-American" remark last week, and a minor national story was born. Be it noted that Pelosi wasn't saying anything new. She has long opposed enforcement of federal immigration laws duly enacted by Congress, even as she pays lip service to the need to enforce the law.

In 2003, Pelosi accused ICE of "terrorizing" workers after agents raided a number of Wal-Mart stores for hiring and contracting undocumented janitors. By the way, during the 2008 primary, then-Sen. Barack Obama also said that some communities "were terrorized" by ICE "raids."

At a news conference last week, La Speaker gave an increasingly qualified explanation: "What I said was separating parents from their children â€¦ ICE raids that separate parents from their children in the middle of night are un-American, and I stand by that. And those were the issues that we were dealing with, three families where the parents were separated â€¦ a parent was separated from the children and the prospect of the second parent being separated. And I do believe that separating parents from their children, in these cases â€¦ sometimes in the middle of night â€¦ is un-American."

I asked Pelosi's staff for information about families that ICE had separated in the middle of the night. Spokesman Brendan Daly sent statements made by two children â€¦ both American citizens â€¦ at the Ess Eff event. The three families turned into two families â€¦ Daly noted that Pelosi spoke with others privately â€¦ and the two mothers were left at home, although the children fear their mothers also could be deported. There was one 5 a.m. arrest. The teenagers also argued that, as U.S. citizens, they have a right to stay in America, and they believe their parents should be able to stay, as well.

Pelosi added, "We have to enforce our laws." But if Pelosi really believes in enforcing the law, why is she criticizing ICE agents who put themselves on the line to make immigration laws work?

At the news conference, Pelosi had little good to say about ICE's enforcement. She noted, "We don't have to kick in doors in the middle of the night and take fathers out of their homes."

Amy Kudwa, from the Department of Homeland Security, told me, "No enforcement actions take place in the middle of the night, whether it be workplace enforcement or fugitive actions." She noted that ICE agents ask "a very rigorous set of questions" about any humanitarian needs or care-giving responsibilities someone might

have before they detain the person.

And Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano believes in using her department's "limited resources to the greatest effect, which is targeting criminal aliens and those employers who flout our laws."

While Pelosi's use of the word "raids" suggests random sweeps that deprive individuals of due process, in the past couple of years ICE efforts have targeted "immigration fugitives" — that is, individuals who have violated a judge's deportation order. Unless they've refused to show up to a hearing, they've had their day in court.

Why were the fathers arrested? I asked Daly. "I don't know specifically beyond what the kids said," he answered. That's interesting because according to ICE, 20 percent of "immigration fugitives" have been convicted of crimes in America in addition to being ordered deported.

In 1995, when the National Rifle Association dismissed those who enforce federal gun laws as "jackbooted government thugs," the left was outraged. Yet Pelosi essentially has a similar opinion of the men and women who risk their safety daily in order to uphold laws passed by her own legislative body. They enforce the law, and she dismisses their work as "un-American." If she doesn't like the law, she should change it. She's the speaker.

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