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Governor Deval Patrick

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DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Media Contact

For Immediate release - March 07, 2007

day="07" month="March" year="2007"

day="07" month="March" year="2007"

Dear Congressman Delahunt:

I am writing to request your assistance. Immigration and Customs Enforcement asserts that they recently learned that Michael Bianco, Inc., a New Bedford leather manufacturer, has been hiring undocumented persons. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers raided the company early yesterday morning and plan to detail all undocumented person, the majority of whom are women. They expect to detain roughly 300 persons and move them to Fort Devens, where each person's immigration status will be reviewed. The detainees may be held at Fort Devens for two to three days. Women with children under the age of two, and persons who are sole caretakers of minor children and/or inform elderly will be released.

The Department of Social Services needs to have staff on site at Fort Devens to provide support for the detainees and coordinate support for their children. We are particularly concerned about the Guatemalan community and the risk that they may be fearful about disclosing the existence or whereabouts of their children given their history with government agencies. We want to provide as many opportunities for safe disclosure as possible to better ensure childrens' safety. We are requesting your help to be allowed to have Department staff on site to assist families traumatized by this devastating event. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Deval L. Patrick