

*R.11 Invite Guest
Speaker*



**Testimony of Becky Straus
Legislative Director, ACLU of Oregon
RESOLUTION: Requesting ICE to Exercise Prosecutorial Discretion
Board of County Commissioners, Multnomah County
March 1, 2012**

Chair Cogen and Commissioners:

My name is Becky Straus and I am here on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to present comments today in support of the proposed Resolution relating to the practices of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE").

We appreciate the attention the Commission is giving to these important issues of public safety and public trust in our community. It is very important at this time that you add your collective voice to that of the many others who have serious concerns about ICE's Secure Communities Program ("S-Comm") and ICE's failure to exercise prosecutorial discretion in the cases of members of our community who have been swept up for very minor offenses or no offenses at all. These practices have undermined public safety in Oregon.

Since 1987, when Oregon passed the law limiting state and local law enforcement activities related to immigration enforcement, a great deal of work has been done to nurture positive and safe relationships between law enforcement agencies and the immigrant community. The devastating effect of ICE's Secure Communities program has rippled through Multnomah County, eroding the great progress that was made.

Multnomah County ought to be a place where people, regardless of their immigration status, feel safe to come forward and report crime, whether they are a victim, a witness or have knowledge of on-going criminal activity. The S-Comm program has subverted that goal by creating the widespread perception that any contact with local law enforcement can lead to detention by ICE – even for U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents.

S-Comm also creates an environment whereby individual law enforcement officers are more likely to use traffic and other minor offenses as pretexts for taking a person of color into custody in order to "verify" the individual's identity. Once the