

# LOST IN DETENTION

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This year, the Obama administration will set new records for detaining and deporting immigrants who are inside the country illegally, removing more than 400,000 people. *Lost in Detention* takes a penetrating look at Obama's vastly expanded immigration net, explores the controversial Secure Communities enforcement program, and goes inside the hidden world of immigration detention.

President Obama, who opposed some strict immigration measures while a candidate in 2008, says that his enforcement programs are part of a strategy to win comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to legalization for some of the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States. But with reform efforts at a standstill, Obama supporters, especially Latino voters, say they are angry about the administration's approach.

FRONTLINE begins its investigation in Obama's home state of Illinois, where correspondent Maria Hinojosa examines the impact of the Secure Communities enforcement program. Secure Communities combines Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) records with those of the FBI and local law enforcement. According to the White House, it's been a critical tool for targeting criminal aliens for removal, a priority for the administration. But FRONTLINE discovers that the program has lost support not only among political leaders in the state but also some in law enforcement. Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn and Sheriff Mark Curran, a Republican from Lake County, Ill., were both supporters of the program when ICE began operating it in the state in 2009, but they say the program has not delivered as promised and has instead created more problems for the state and a backlash among immigrants.

Hinojosa talks to the family of Roxana Garcia, whose five children—all U.S. citizens—have been without their mother since she was stopped for a minor traffic infraction and deported to Mexico after 15 years in the United States. Stories like theirs have spurred Latinos in particular to rally against a policy that they say rips families apart.

During a yearlong investigation, FRONTLINE also uncovered a troubling picture of abuse inside immigration detention facilities, including more than a dozen allegations of sexual abuse at Willacy Detention Center in south Texas, as well as alleged cases of beatings, racism and management cover-ups. Government documents recently obtained by the ACLU and FRONTLINE offer the most significant window into sexual abuse in immigration detention, indicating a more endemic problem for detainees inside detention, who lack the due process and oversight afforded to criminal prisoners.

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## CREDITS

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*Photo Credit:* Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images



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