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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IMMIGRATION RAIDS CREATE EMOTIONAL TRAUMA AND ECONOMIC DISTRESS FOR CHILDREN, NEW REPORT FINDS

New Bedford, MA – The Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) and the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NSWMA) today released a new report by the Urban Institute and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), which examines how immigration enforcement actions such as the Michael Bianco raid in New Bedford have affected the well-being of children of immigrants in the U.S.

The report, *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*, profiles three communities that have recently experienced large-scale worksite raids by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency within the past year, including New Bedford; the other sites are Greeley, Colorado, and Grand Island, Nebraska. On March 6, 2007, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials staged a worksite raid at a Michael Bianco, Inc. factory in New Bedford.

Researchers found that for every two people detained in immigration enforcement operations, one child is left behind. Two-thirds of these children are U.S. citizens and a similar share is under age ten. The report details the consequences of immigration enforcement operations on children's psychological, educational, economic, and social well-being. It also outlines the heavy burden that workplace raids are placing on communities, school systems, social service providers, and religious institutions, which have acted as first responders for families in these incidents.

Corinn Williams, Executive Director of the Community Economic Development Center in New Bedford has been serving the immigrant community impacted by the raid. "The horrific pain that people witnessed during the ordeal of the raid has not gone away. That raid still tears away at our community in New Bedford. Families are torn apart, and mothers and children are suffering, in some ways more than ever," she stated.

The report also outlines the economic impact on families and communities. In New Bedford, the Niño's Fund was established and administered by the Community Foundation of Southeastern MA (CFSMA). Craig J. Dutra, President of CFSMA noted the generous public response to the devastating impact the Michael Bianco raid had on families in New Bedford. "We all care about children, and about our neighbors. Over \$200,000 has been contributed to the Niño's Fund to support children whose parents were detained in the aftermath of that raid. To date the fund has distributed \$180,000 in food, energy, and housing assistance to 103 families." The need is still great, and the Fund is still taking donations to assist these families.

"There is no greater nightmare for a young child than the forced separation from his or her parents," stated Dr. Amaro Laria. During the crisis in New Bedford, Dr. Laria, Director of the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, volunteered his services to help with the initial intake of affected families.

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MIRA works to advocate for the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees. In partnership with its members, MIRA advances this mission through education, training, leadership development, organizing, policy analysis and advocacy.