

SURVIVING SPOUSES AGAINST DEPORTATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2007

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Surviving Spouses Urge End to Widow Penalty

PORTLAND, OR – One month ago, Congressmen Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ.) unveiled new legislation designed to fix our nation's badly broken immigration system. The Bill includes a fix to the "widow penalty," a little known trap in the immigration law that leads to the deportation of widows of U.S. citizens when the death occurs during immigration processing. The Bill is called the "Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy Act of 2007" ("STRIVE Act"), and has been given the House bill number **H.R. 1645**. The "widow penalty fix" is found in **Section 516** of the Bill, pages 420-426.

The non-partisan non-profit advocacy organization, Surviving Spouses Against Deportation (SSAD) was formed early this year to provide a forum for grieving spouses of U.S. citizens facing deportation along with their minor orphaned children, and a resource for the families and friends of surviving spouses. SSAD has gathered information on more than 80 widow cases across the country.

Notable cases include Ana Maria Moncayo Gigax (California), the widow of a Border Patrol Agent who was killed while on duty in Washington D.C., Diana Engstrom (Illinois) and Dahianna Heard (Florida), two widows whose spouses were killed in Iraq while serving as civilian contractors, Jacqueline Coats (California), whose husband drowned while trying to save two boys from drowning at San Francisco Beach Park, Khin Win (Las Vegas), whose husband was killed by a drunk driver.

For more information on SSAD, please visit the website: www.ssad.org