



Reject the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act: A Distraction from Real Solutions to Address Gang Violence in the US

Senator Heller's Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act (S. 2380) is the WRONG approach to addressing gang violence. Though the bill is advertised as promoting public safety, in actuality it erodes due process and promotes unconstitutional policing practices.

Specifically, [the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act](#):

- Creates an [overbroad definition of criminal gang](#) far broader than most state definitions and so sweeping it could encompass churches that assist undocumented immigrants for designation as a criminal gang.
- Impacts all non-citizens including legal permanent residents, TPS holders, unaccompanied children and refugees. Moreover, all youth of color would be subject to unchecked racial profiling.
- Targets individuals for mandatory detention and deportation based on an immigration agent's mere "reason to believe" gang association. Mere association with individuals considered disfavored could result in deportation, ensuring the rampant misidentification of youth of color as gang members.
- Does not exclude children, opening the door for children to be denied humanitarian protections, permanently separated from their parents and support systems, and sent or returned to countries experiencing record levels of violence.

Heller's approach:

- Politicizes a serious problem that requires thoughtful evidence-based solutions. Our immigration laws already provide a vast set of tools to deport individuals suspected of gang affiliation. Similarly, state laws provide ample avenues to arrest individuals suspected of gang affiliation.
- Fails to acknowledge that there are already [robust federal responses](#) to gang violence in place.
- Focuses on deportation, which can [undermine police gang investigations](#), further destroying efforts to build trust among police and the communities they serve.

The solutions to addressing gang violence in the US involve:

- Adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses prevention and intervention rather than singularly focusing on law enforcement suppression tactics.
- Ensuring that solutions for unaccompanied minors fleeing Central America are not conflated with gang suppression policies. While [unaccompanied minors are not driving gang-related violence](#), investments in prevention and early intervention can help children fleeing violence and trauma get the supports and guidance necessary to rebuild their lives.
- Providing resources for local programs that provide support using a model of trauma responsive care; involving local community members, including former gang members; ensuring opportunities exist that deter gang involvement such as education, training and employment programs; working with faith-based organizations, schools and other groups to conduct outreach and act as liaisons for individuals and families as needed.
- Investing in local programs in schools, churches and health centers to support the successful resettlement of unaccompanied children fleeing violence and seeking humanitarian protection.
- Promoting constitutional policing practices that reject racialized stereotypes about people of color.