



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Missouri-Kansas Immigration Attorneys Condemn ICE Officer's Actions

Kansas City, Missouri – In response to the egregious actions by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer against an immigration attorney and chapter member as she represented her clients, the Missouri-Kansas Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) issues the following statement:

“The behavior of an ICE Officer on June 26, 2018 in Kansas City, MO, was unacceptable and we demand a full investigation. Violence against attorneys performing their job duties will not be tolerated. In this instance, a Chapter member was surrendering her three-year old client and reuniting him with his mother when she was assaulted by an officer without justification. While we recognize that being in the public spotlight and having community members witness ICE’s decision to deport a pregnant woman and her child may be stressful for officers, there is no justification for the use of force against attorneys upholding their duty to their clients. If ICE behaves this way towards members of the legal profession while the cameras are rolling, there is no doubt that the most vulnerable are suffering far worse abuses.

For years, attorneys have worked hard to maintain collegial, professional relationships with ICE enforcement officials. We make this statement recognizing the necessity of frank, open dialogue and trust. Most of our interactions with the Kansas City ICE Field Office are professional, courteous and honest. What happened yesterday is a shocking transgression. It is profoundly disappointing that the actions of this single official place these longstanding, productive relationships in jeopardy. We do not demonize or attack dedicated government professionals for doing their very difficult jobs, when they do so professionally. All that we ask is for the same respect and decency in return for ourselves as professionals and our clients as fellow human beings. We — and the American people — expect and deserve nothing less.”

###

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) represents over 15,000 U.S. immigration attorneys practicing worldwide and the Missouri-Kansas Chapter of AILA represents the over 200 immigration attorneys practicing in Missouri, Kansas and Southern Illinois. For further information or comment in St. Louis, please contact, Ken Schmitt, Missouri-Kansas Chapter Chair (email: kschmitt@us-legalsolutions.com or phone: 314-729-1049), or in Kansas City, Angela Ferguson (email: angela@austinferguson.com, phone: 816-914-6210) Missouri-Kansas Public Relations Chair.