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# **ICE Chief: We're Against Amnesty, No Administration's Been Stronger on Removing Illegal Immigrants**

**August 11, 2010**

ICE Chief: We're Against Amnesty, No Administration's Been Stronger on Removing Illegal Immigrants | On the Record

Special Guests | ICE Director John Morton

**GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST:** Now an update to a story we've been following closely here "On the Record." While the country has been zeroing in on Arizona's illegal immigration law, a federal fingerprinting program is being used in 27 states. It's called Secure Communities.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director John Morton joins us live. Nice to see you, sir.

**JOHN MORTON, ICE DIRECTOR:** Nice to see you, Greta.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** All right, what is this program?

**MORTON:** Secure Communities is a new federal initiative that is literally going to transform immigration enforcement. And what we do is we take the fingerprints from every person who's booked into a jail, whether it's federal, state or local, and we run it against both the FBI's database and against the Department of Homeland Security's database to identify criminal offenders in our criminal justice system who aren't here lawfully and need to go home.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** All right. The minute you get them, do they then go through the criminal justice system and get prosecuted and maybe do their time here in the United States and then you send them home, or do you send them home before they go through the criminal justice system?

**MORTON:** Whenever possible, we try to let them go through the criminal justice system, make sure that the crime that they committed and for which they were arrested, they're held to justice on that. Then they come us to, and we send them home, wherever possible.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** All right, now, here at "On the Record," we've been -- we've been hammering this whole issue of secure borders (INAUDIBLE) illegal immigrants, and I think in all fairness, we need to talk about the numbers here because they're -- they're quite interesting. In the first nine months, or now ten -- ten months -- ten months, nine months, of fiscal 2010, ICE has removed 279,035 people, give or take, right?

**MORTON:** That's right.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** And that is a 10 percent increase over the fiscal year 2008, which is the last fiscal year of the Bush administration. So you're up. You're up 10 percent.

**MORTON:** We're not only up 10 percent, we have brought renewed vigor to the immigration enforcement laws of the country. We are going to set a record number of removals of criminal offenders this year. No administration in the history of this nation removed more illegal immigrants from the country than we did last year. And I expect the records to continue. We're serious about enforcement. We're going to go out and we're just going to do it. We're just -- follow a sensible tough, rational priorities.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** All right, and I know you're not soft on crime. You're a life-long prosecutor.

**MORTON:** That's right.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** So it's not like -- like you're sort of getting weak-kneed on the whole issue of illegal immigration.

**MORTON:** No, listen, we deal in a world of limited resources. We are appropriated enough resources from Congress every year to remove about 400,000 people. That's less than 4 percent of the 10.8 million people who are here unlawfully.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** I don't...

**MORTON:** So we got -- we have to establish a rational set of priorities. And from our perspective, you got to start with national security cases, criminal offenders, border security and people who game the system. That's what we're about.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** I don't think people realize that, is that -- I mean, you're a life-long prosecutor (INAUDIBLE) I've dealt with you life-long prosecutors! You want to -- you want get people who are violating the law, and that you only can deport those that you can afford to deport. And you get every single one of -- every single dime you get is from Congress. You don't get it from any outside place. So if they gave you more money, I take it, you would deport more.

**MORTON:** That's right. We use the resources that we're given by Congress to do the best job that we can under the circumstances. And when we have limited resources, not enough to allow us to identify and remove every single person in this country, we got to focus on those people that are threatening public safety first and foremost. We got to make sure the border's secure, and we got to make that people aren't gaming the system. So that's what we're doing.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** All right -- all right, what's the story about the union? Because I know -- let me get this -- the union, the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council of American Federation of Government Employees has passed a resolution saying that they're not happy with your organization, and basically, that they think you're leaning towards amnesty. True, false?

**MORTON:** False. Completely false.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** I mean, it's true that they passed a resolution, false that you're doing that.

**MORTON:** The charges are, one, that we're pro-amnesty and that we're anti-enforcement. Both of those are completely false. The president's against amnesty. The secretary's against amnesty. I'm against amnesty. Anti-enforcement? As we just noted, no administration in the country's history has been stronger on enforcement. The results speak for themselves, a record number of removals last year. There

are going to be a record number of criminal removals this year, a record number of businesses who've had their I-9s (ph) audited, their records audited, a record number of employers who've been prosecuted for illegal hiring, more felons prosecuted...

**VAN SUSTEREN:** And I got to go. And I got to go. But people should write their congressmen and tell them to give you more money if they want more deported, right?

**MORTON:** We need -- we're all about serious enforcement. We'll do what we can with the resources we got and we'll make it sensible.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** Director Morton, thank you, sir.

**MORTON:** Thank you.