

## CASTLE CONVENES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION -- September 22, 2008

Georgetown, DE -- Today, Delaware Congressman Mike Castle was joined by representatives from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency and various Sussex County police departments to discuss the challenges of crime and illegal immigration. Rep. Castle previously organized meetings on this topic in December 2007 and May 2008. On June 17, he sent a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff requesting greater resources for law enforcement officers in Sussex County. Today's meeting was the first time that ICE officials from Washington, D.C. and ICE regional offices from Philadelphia sat down with local chiefs of police in Delaware to develop a strategy for improving cooperation and coordination among local, state, and federal officials.

Law enforcement officers in Delaware face problems linked to illegal immigration including human trafficking, smuggling, counterfeiting, money laundering, illicit drug trade, identity fraud, violent crime, and sexual offenses. It is Rep. Castle's hope that these local brainstorming sessions will strengthen the relationship between ICE and Delaware's law enforcement community.

"Today, we identified several critical needs, including the importance of combating document fraud and improving access to ICE's criminal databases. I am hopeful that these meetings will lead to greater cooperation and assistance for Delaware officers.

"Criminal investigations in Sussex County are often complicated by the involvement of undocumented aliens, which hinders their ability to ensure public safety. Victimization of the undocumented community is also a huge problem, and law enforcement officers require training and resources to handle these challenges. It is clear that additional attention is needed to assist our local officers in keeping Sussex County safe. My objective in holding these local meetings is to put ICE officials from Washington face to face with local chiefs of police here in Delaware and develop a basis for working together," Rep. Castle said.

ICE attendees of today's meeting included William F. Riley, ICE Headquarters Representative of State and Local Coordination; Anthony Ditchkus, Supervisory Detention & Deportation Department; Thomas Decker, Field Office Director; Scott Blake, Assistant Field Officer; Uvanney Alford, Congressional Liaison; and William Lowder, Resident Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Delaware.

Sussex law enforcement attendees included Georgetown Police Chief Bill Toppings, Milton Police Chief

Bill Phillips, Seaford Police Chief Gary Morris, Milford Police Chief Keith Hudson, Laurel Police Chief Michael Wilson, Blades Police Chief Edwin Cooke, and Georgetown Victims Services Coordinator Ruby Kepley.

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