NEWS CONFERENCE

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University of Miami School of Law Students Call For Shutdown Of Immigration Detention In Glades County Jail

Jail Head Writes Revealing Memo

CORAL GABLES, FL (November 20, 2013) – Law students at the University of Miami School of Law's Immigration Clinic will hold a news conference on Thursday, November 21st at 11 a.m. in Room A216B of the law school on the Coral Gables campus at 1311 Miller Drive. Student will discuss substandard conditions at the Glades County jail and urge federal immigration officials to terminate their contract with the Glades Sheriff's Office, which runs the jail in Moorehaven, Florida.

Law students, under supervising attorneys, represent detainees at the jail and conduct "Know Your Rights" presentations for the detainees. As a result of the students' outreach during a September visit, the students drafted a letter about conditions in the jail, including insufficient law student access, overcrowding and excessive noise, inappropriate use of segregation, poor food and water, detainee allegations of mistreatment, exorbitant telephone fees, and an inadequate legal research computer program. The jail has imposed obstacles to law students visiting with their clients in order to prepare for court.

The Glades County Detention Center is a county jail under contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold hundreds of detainees who are in immigration proceedings.

As a result of the letter, Major D. K. Hensen, a chief administrator of the jail, on behalf of Glades County Sheriff Stuart Widdon, criticized the law students for raising their concerns and

recommendations in a memorandum to Ramon Bado, Assistant Field Office Director for the Miami Field Office of ICE. The memorandum does not address any of the concerns raised by the law students. The federal government did not endorse the Sheriff's response.

"Our concerns have fallen on deaf ears," said Cyndi Poon, a student who visited the detention center and drafted the letter of concern. "The Sheriff's Office has made it clear that it will not respond to our concerns regarding the standard of care for detainees."

"Our concerns are not 'inaccurate or false statements,' as Major Hensen claims, but come from our firsthand observation of the conditions of the jail and from the conversations that we had with the detainees," said another student, Beatrice Bianchi Fasani. "Given the serious concerns we have raised and the jail's inappropriate response, ICE should terminate its contract with Glades."

Glades County Jail holds hundreds of women and men for ICE. The average price of immigration detention is approximately $150 a day per person, making federal contracts an extremely lucrative business for counties, including Glades County.

Glades County Jail is not the only Florida county jail that has recently come under fire for poor conditions. In a 2012 report *Expose and Close,* authored by Americans for Immigrant Justice and the Baker Defense Project, Baker County Jail in Macclenny, Florida was featured as an inhumane jail.

"ICE must reverse course in its detention policy," commented Rebecca Sharpless, Director of the Law School's Immigration Clinic. "ICE is using too much taxpayer money to jail too many people in abysmal detention conditions. We urge ICE to not renew its contract with Glades."