



## Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition

PRESS STATEMENT  
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### **State Rep. Fattman Says Undocumented Immigrant Rape Victims "Should be Afraid to Come Forward"**

*Human rights advocates nationwide express outrage, demand apology*

BOSTON — State Representative Ryan Fattman yesterday said that undocumented immigrants who are raped and beaten in the street should be afraid to go to the police.

The statement was quoted in the [Worcester Telegram and Gazette](#) (Wed, June 8, 2011), which asked the Sutton Republican if he would be concerned that these victims might be afraid to report the crime under the Secure Communities enforcement program. Rep Fattman belongs to a group of Representatives protesting Governor Deval Patrick's decision not to sign onto the controversial immigration enforcement program. In part, the Governor rejected Secure Communities because it may endanger the willingness of some crime victims to seek help from the police.

“My thought is that if someone is here illegally, they should be afraid to come forward,” Mr. Fattman said, referring specifically to rape victims beaten in the street. “If you do it the right way, you don’t have to be concerned about these things,” he said, referring to obtaining legal immigration status.

Mr. Fattman also noted that, while citizens have the right to be considered innocent until found guilty in court, “I don’t think that principle extends to illegal immigrants.”

The comments were quickly picked up by [blogs](#) and emails across the nation, and drew reaction from advocates for immigrants, for rape victims, and for the basic rights of all people.

"We are deeply saddened that an elected member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives should demonstrate such flagrant disregard for the fundamental safety and protection of people in our Commonwealth, regardless of their immigration status," said Eva Millona, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. "The Representative's comment is the latest ugly illustration of how the immigration debate has sunk to a new low, and how some have come to vilify undocumented workers, women and children as subhuman. The attitude Representative Fattman expressed is not only anti-immigrant, it's an insult to basic human dignity."

"Representative Ryan Fattman would rather see impunity for rapists than justice for women," said Josh Rubenstein, Northeast Regional Director of Amnesty International U.S.A. "Undocumented immigrants may have committed the misdemeanor of crossing the U.S. Border so they can work hard in American households washing toilets and providing loving care of someone else's children — all this so that they can feed their own, thousands of miles away."

"Representative Fattman owes all victims of sexual violence — and everyone who has worried about their safety walking down the street — a thorough and sincere apology," said Mary Lauby, Executive Director of Jane Doe. "His statement underscores our coalition's opposition to the proposed program and how the Secure Communities program would undermine the safety of undocumented women and men. Jane Doe's work focuses on dignity as well a liberty. There could not be a more fitting focus for our work alongside MIRA and others than to demand fulfillment of the rights that women, people of color, LGBTQ communities, immigrants and others suffering discrimination have fought so hard to affirm: that we are all created equal, and no one should live in fear of violence."

In partnership with its members, MIRA works for the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees through policy analysis and advocacy, institutional organizing, training and leadership development, and strategic communications.

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