



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## Serrano Office Participates in Immigration Vigil

[JOSÉ M. SERRANO](#) June 22, 2009

June 20, 2009

On the eve of Father's Day, the Youth Committee of the organization Families for Freedom held its annual vigil to raise awareness of American children whose families are ripped apart due to the federal government's deportation policies.

Senator Serrano, who was represented by his staff, issued the following statement: "Today we declare, in a united voice, that a Country priding itself on family values, must stop tearing families apart; and that a City so deeply tied to the immigrant experience will continue to embrace the principles of freedom for all. On behalf of the residents of the 28th Senate District – residents of all color and class, status and station – I stand proudly in support of New York's immigrant community on this historic occasion."

The Senator leads East Harlem Against Deportation, a dynamic grassroots organizing effort that includes a letter-writing campaign to President Obama, and the formulation of a policy agenda to protect undocumented immigrants and their families in New York. Serrano staff members distributed appeal letters during the vigil, which was held in Union Square.

A study released by the Senator's father, Congressman Serrano, found that from 1998 to 2007 more than 100,000 parents of U.S. citizen children were deported. Currently, due to changes

in laws in 1996, immigration judges have no discretion in almost all deportation cases and effectively serve to rubber stamp deportation orders. The Child Citizen Protection Act (HR 182) is the only bill currently in Congress that unties the hands of immigration judges to consider the best interests of U.S. citizen children during deportation proceedings.

Standing in front of a wall of broken hearts, children expressed their fear and anxiety over the prospect of their families being torn apart. Over the past few months, hundreds of hand-made broken hearts were collected by U.S. citizen children, symbolizing the pain and emptiness they feel due to deportation policies. “Broken families lead to broken hearts. We will send our broken hearts to Congress, so they understand the injustices we are forced to face because of inhumane immigration laws,” said Mizue Aizeki, coordinator of the Families for Freedom Youth Committee.