Atlanta, GA, February 16, 2017 — In response to news this past week about surges in detentions and deportations by ICE and a rising fear and anxiety amongst immigrant communities, Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice), an affiliation of five civil rights organizations, issues the following statement:

“Asian Americans Advancing Justice is outraged that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is increasingly aggressive and overbroad in its immigration enforcement efforts, creating chaos and panic in communities. Due to the Trump Administration’s executive order on interior enforcement signed on January 25th, there are no longer any meaningful enforcement priorities as there were under the prior Administration, and as a result, undocumented immigrants, in general, are now all at grave risk.

We are angered that those promised protection by the federal government now face a devastating broken promise. Daniel Ramirez Medina, a 23-year-old resident of Seattle, is among more than 800,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients who affirmatively gave their information to the U.S. government and were promised a reprieve from deportation, and he has been detained and separated from his 3-year old U.S. citizen child and family.

We are horrified that a victim of domestic violence in Texas, Irving Gonzalez, was detained in an El Paso court while seeking a restraining order against her abuser. Such actions only serve to deter victims of domestic violence from coming forward to challenge abuse and result in physical harm or death to victims of domestic abuse. It also violates a Department of Homeland Security memo, “Prosecutorial Discretion: Certain Victims, Witnesses, and Plaintiffs,” that directs agency personnel to avoid any enforcement actions that would deter victims, witnesses, and plaintiffs, including victims of domestic violence, from coming forward and reporting violations of the law.

Through the enforcement executive orders, this new Administration has given ICE agents carte blanche to instill terror into immigrant communities. History will not reflect kindly on this moment, which is reminiscent of other dark times in our past when racism and xenophobia against immigrants prevailed. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to Japanese Internment during WWII to the surveillance and profiling of Muslim and South Asian Americans, we are in the midst of the latest wave of resurgent xenophobia. We call on Congress to rescind these executive orders and stand up for our core values as a nation that welcomes immigrants and respects due process and fair treatment under the law.

We urge immigrants - particularly those who are undocumented and out of status - to know their rights because equipping oneself with the right information is the best defense against these aggressive and inhumane tactics.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice will continue to resist this agenda of fear and intimidation. We will fight to protect our communities against deportations and our Nation’s values that no human is illegal. We are, after all, a nation of immigrants.”
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org.