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**Statement of the FAIR IMMIGRATION REFORM MOVEMENT (FIRM)  
On the Decision of DHS to Separate the Gonzalez Family and the One-Year  
“Deferred Action” on Marie’s Deportation**

July 5, 2005

Washington, DC – While FIRM is pleased that the Department of Homeland Security has given Marie Gonzalez a one-year deferment on her pending deportation, our immigration system failed her family. Marie’s parents received no reprieve and must return to a country they have not lived in for over a decade, underscoring the urgent need to reform our broken immigration system and pass the DREAM Act.

Like most immigrant families, the Gonzalez family came to the United States –the land of opportunity—in search of a better life. They worked, paid taxes, and were active members in their church and community. The separation of the Gonzalez family—Marie, 19 years old, living in Missouri, and her parents voluntarily departing to Costa Rica, shows the unfairness and dysfunction of our current immigration system.

No longer can the federal government defend the status quo of our broken system, which is breaking the lives and dreams of immigrants every day. The time to fix these laws is now. America deserves an immigration system that reflects our values of fairness and equality. Deporting hard working people and splitting a nuclear family only creates more problems and does not offer any workable solutions.

FIRM supports immigration laws that give permanent status to hard working, tax-paying immigrants that are already here and offers opportunities for safe, legal and orderly future migration of hardworking immigrants and their families. We stand ready to work with Members of Congress to make sure that real immigration reforms are enacted in the coming years.

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*FIRM (Fair Immigration Reform Movement) is a coalition of grassroots community organizations nationwide, including statewide immigrant rights coalitions, organizing networks, faith-based groups, and low-income and other networks organized around ethnicity or national origin organizations, working on behalf of comprehensive immigration reform and immigrant rights. FIRM is convened by the Center for Community Change.*