

July 21, 2015

United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley

“Oversight of the Administration’s Misdirected Immigration Enforcement Policies: Examining the Impact in Public Safety and honoring the victims.”

Good Morning. My name is Laura Wilkerson and I am here to tell you the impact of illegal alien crime that has affected our family. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

My husband George and I live just outside of Houston, TX. We raised 3 children. We are a typical Texan/American blue collar, hardworking family. George worked endless hours so that I could stay home with our children. We wanted to provide them with our beliefs and our values. We wanted them to know Jesus. We provided for their needs, built them up to be honest, compassionate and caring human beings. We accomplished that.

Our youngest was Joshua Aaron Wilkerson, I will tell you a little about him.

Josh was a compassionate, caring child.

He was 18 years old, in his senior year at high school.

He listened a lot more than he spoke. When he did speak, others listened.

Josh had never been in trouble before at school or with the Law, not even a traffic ticket.

He loved his family deeply.

He had a very strong spiritual bond with Jesus.

That fateful day of Tuesday, November 16, 2010. His dad was at work already. His Brother was away in The United States Air force. His Sister was in College. Josh came down and said Mom, I am leaving to school. I put down what I was doing, and said hey, no way your leaving without a hug. He smiled, rolled his eyes a bit. We hugged. We both said I love you, and I watched him get in his truck and head to school. Josh never came home from school that day.

The killer. Here is what I know about him. His name is Hermilo V. Morales. He is 19 years old. His parents whom were in this country illegally, brought him here illegally when he was 10 years old. He has a sister. His parents had recently kicked him out of their home. He was charged with harassment. He was in front of a Judge 10 days before he murdered Joshua. He relied on a friend’s mother for shelter and food. He had no driver’s license, no money for lunch and no transportation. He was an acquaintance of Josh’s through school. He had given him a ride home 3-5 times. He asked Josh that day for a ride home. He brutally murdered Joshua.

The trial. We waited 2 long years for the trial, only to see such images of Josh that were horrific. We watched as a shock belt was put around his waist because no one was certain of his

behavior. We watched as he showed no remorse whatsoever. We listened to 15 hours of audio tape, in which his only concern was how much time would he get, was there a bed in jail, when would he leave, could he have a hamburger, etc. All of these audio tapes are from before he finally told detectives the truth about where Josh's body was. The killer was a black belt in mixed martial arts. He bragged from the stand about how his "killing skills" just took over. We watched as he got off of the stand and stood over the District Attorney so he could show the jury how he strangled Josh. He said that he first hit Josh in the face, so that he would not be able to fight back. He then kneed him in his stomach. We listened to him say that he was frustrated that Josh still had bloody bubbles coming out of his nose. He picked up a closet rod and beat Josh so severely on the head that the rod broke into 4 pieces. He strangled him over and over. He waited, Joshua died. Per the Medical Examiner he tortured him. He tied Joshua up like an animal. He cleaned up the scene, put Josh in our truck and went to the store to buy gasoline. He put Josh in a field. He put his school ID next to Josh's body, doused him with the gas and set him on fire. After that the killer went to a friend's house, took a shower, and went to see a movie. He laughed, He had popcorn and a coke.

He will be up for Parole when he is 49 years old. Until then, Taxpayers provide his shelter and his food. He lives, he breathes.

Instead of getting our child home that day, we got an autopsy report that reads in part. This body is received in a grey body bag. A white male with a toe tag that reads Joshua Wilkerson. He is 100 pounds. He has been tied up with braided rope multiple times. 13 rounds of rope from his neck, through the belt loop on the back of his pants, to his hands and feet behind his back. His body is charred from fire. There is significant skin slippage on his buttocks, his abdomen, and on his face. His hands are completely charred. He has many fractures in his face. His throat is crushed. In his pocket he has 1 piece of gum and a tardy slip. Trust me this is the short version.

Cause of death. Blunt head, neck and abdomen trauma and strangulation. Manner, Homicide.

Our family is left with a Birth certificate, an autopsy report and a death certificate. By the grace Of God we are also left with hearts that are badly broken, but still maintain the memories of such a beautiful relationship with Josh.

I know you will sympathize with our story, but I want more than that. I want you to be angry that America's borders are wide open. America does not know who is in this country. It is time to put American's first. Close the Borders, figure out who is really here. Keep statistics. Realize that we are at war right here in this country.

I urge you not to wait until it's your child or grandchild. You never want them to live through what our family and many, many others families have survived.

Thank you to the Remembrance Project for honoring our victims, long before anyone else has.

Thank you to Senator Charles Grassley and Thank you for the opportunity to share our tragedy with you.

Laura Wilkerson, forever Joshua's Mom.