

LETTERS

Key lesson of '07 immigration raid: There could be legal recourse

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Zoila Chingo de Gomez stood outside the Michael Bianco Inc. factory in New Bedford last month. She was detained for more than two weeks, leaving her apart from her children, in 2007 after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided the factory. CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

As one of the lawyers on the team that represented immigrants arrested in the 2007 New Bedford factory raid, I appreciated Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio's article reporting on the possibility that similar raids may be initiated under the Trump administration (“

['Hard times are coming': Deportation fears revive painful memories of 2007 immigration raid,](#)” Page A1, Jan. 19).

In hindsight, what can be learned from the New Bedford raid? As McDonnell Nieto del Rio points out, the raid had a devastating long-term effect on families (including those with children who were US citizens), who were torn apart by aggressive immigration enforcement policies.

Second, there was a significant adverse economic impact on New Bedford as a result of the closure of the Bianco textile factory.

Finally, in response to the government’s enforcement action, Greater Boston Legal Services and others were able to obtain relief for more than half of the 361 arrested undocumented immigrants based on a variety of legal defenses. Notably, a number of these immigrants, many of whom were Indigenous Mayans from Guatemala, prevailed in their political asylum claims due to findings by immigration judges that their fears of persecution were in fact well-founded.

With significant legal and community support, there is recourse from factory raids, at least under current law.

Harvey Kaplan

Brighton

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