



**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

November 8, 2007

The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for writing yesterday and expressing your concerns about the incident that occurred during the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Halloween costume contest hosted by ICE Headquarters on October 31, 2007. I deeply regret this incident. Although I was not aware at the time of the contest that the employee disguised his skin color, I believe that it was inappropriate for me to recognize any individual wearing an escaped prisoner costume.

In response to your questions, here are the facts:

On October 31, 2007, ICE Headquarters hosted a CFC Halloween costume contest for Metro Washington, DC ICE employees. A flyer advertising the event clearly indicated that employees were expected to wear only tasteful costumes. An estimated 50-75 employees, many of whom were wearing costumes, attended the event. One employee who attended the event was wearing a striped costume-style jail outfit; a dreadlock wig and makeup on his skin. The costume was both inappropriate and offensive; inappropriate in that it could leave a negative impression as to the respect that ICE has for those in our custody, and offensive as to manner in which the individual portrayed his skin color.

1. I had very limited interaction with this individual. Because I was running late for the event, each employee was asked to come to the table quickly, state their name and the particular division at ICE for which they worked. This employee was towards the middle or the end of the employees with costumes. This individual was present at the table for less than half a minute before he moved on and was followed by the next employee. I noted only his name on a list I was keeping of employees who were participating. When it came time to pick award finalists, the other "judges" had identified three recipients which apparently didn't include this particular employee. However, one of my fellow "judges" noted that all recipients were from the "management" side of ICE and concluded that we should attempt to include someone from the "operations" side of ICE for more balance. We removed the third place recipients and replaced with the employee in question. At that time, he was the only "operations" employee that was brought to my attention. After a discussion that lasted at most 15 seconds, I was handed a list of the three awardees, stood up, and quickly announced the winners. This employee was recognized for originality. I left the room for a few minutes and went up to my office (one floor above), but returned to take a photo with the winners, including this employee.

