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For Immediate Release

### *Mazzoli Praises Louisville Immigrant Community*

The Center for Free Inquiry at Hanover College (CFI) and the Metro Louisville Mayor's Office of International Affairs hosted a lecture and discussion in Louisville on Tuesday to kick off CFI's symposium on "Immigration and American National Identity," which will be held on the campus of Hanover College on March 12 and 13.

The United States is a nation of immigrants. The Statue of Liberty stands proudly in New York Harbor welcoming the huddled masses of the world who yearn to breathe free. We take pride in the melting pot that has made generations of immigrants American. In our own time many fear that the numbers of people flocking into the United States have grown too great to assimilate. Former US Congressman, Romano L. "Ron" Mazzoli told those assembled at the Frazier Arms Museum that Louisville was doing a good job of "integrating immigrants instead of trying to assimilate them." Mazzoli talked about how different America is today than it was when his father entered the country through Ellis Island shortly after the turn of the last century. "Today "Ellis Island" is Louisville and other cities throughout the country to which immigrants move directly."

Omar Ayyash, Director of the Office of International Affairs in the Metro Louisville Mayor's office outlined the efforts of the OIA to ensure a safe and productive environment for immigrants in Louisville and to preserve their cultural heritage as they become a part of the greater Louisville Community. "OIA strives to create a multicultural community recognized for its climate of support and quality of life," said Ayyash.

This intense national discussion will continue as the Center for Free Inquiry at Hanover College presents "Immigration and American National Identity," a five-session symposium to be held March 12-13 at Hanover College. All events are open to the public and free of charge.

Richard Alba, professor of sociology and public policy at the University of Albany in New York, will discuss "Assimilation: The American Pattern," March 12, at 4 p.m. in Fitzgibbon Recital Hall, Lynn Center for Fine Arts. Ruben Navarrette, columnist and editorial board member of *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, will present "Decoding the Immigration Debate: Why a Nation of Immigrants Doesn't Like Immigrants," at 8 p.m.

Speakers will convene at 1:30 p.m., Monday, March 13, for a roundtable discussion. The session will be held in the board room of the J. Graham Brown Campus Center and will give attendees an opportunity to engage in lively discussion with all four participants.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, will examine "Mass Immigration vs. Modern Society" in the afternoon session, which begins at 4 p.m. Kathleen Newland, director and cofounder of the Migration Policy Institute, will discuss "Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Expressing American Values," at 8 p.m. Both presentations will be held in Fitzgibbon Recital Hall.

"Immigration and American National Identity" will conclude Tuesday, March 14, with participants participating in "State of Affairs" on WFPL in Louisville, KY at 11:00 a.m.

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Founded in 1997, The Center for Free Inquiry® is an interdisciplinary institute of Hanover College; it is dedicated to exploring fundamental and enduring issues of human social and spiritual life through the lens of the liberal arts. CFI addresses itself to a broad public and seeks to advance knowledge and shape public debate through lectures, symposia, and publications. For more information about CFI and its programs, call 812-866-6848 or email [cfi@hanover.edu](mailto:cfi@hanover.edu). Visit CFI on the web at [cfi.hanover.edu](http://cfi.hanover.edu).