

Key, Lori

From: Council Member Luevanos <RLuevanos@simivalley.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 5:16 PM
To: ClerkoftheBoard; Bennett, Steve; Parks, Linda; Supervisor Huber; Zaragoza, John; Long, Kelly
Subject: re: Public Comment for Item 34 Truth Act Forum ICE SB54

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Dear Ventura County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing this letter with extreme concern for the safety and well being of our immigrant and Latinx residents in Ventura County. As the only elected Latina official in Simi Valley I am acutely aware of the detrimental economic and social impact that having ICE enforcement activities has in our Ventura County communities and businesses. While there are elected officials in Ventura County who do not agree with SB54 the California Values Act has, in fact, been upheld in an appellate court of law and it still remains the law to this day. Let me remind the you that the California Values Act states that state and local law enforcement agencies "are barred from using their resources on behalf of federal immigration enforcement agencies." This means that any law enforcement entity in the state of California, including Ventura County can not transfer immigrants to ICE. The concept of non-cooperation with ICE/INS is not a new concept and it was first promoted and implemented by Los Angeles Police Department Police Chief Daryl Gates who was well aware of the many detrimental impacts that cooperation of local law enforcement with immigration officials in a community with a large immigrant population has especially in hindering their ability to investigate crimes within the community. In 1979, then LAPD Police Chief Darryl Gates implemented Special Order 40 which stated, since undocumented people "because of their status are often more vulnerable to victimization, crime prevention assistance will be offered to assist them in safeguarding their property and to lessen their potential to become crime victims." Chief Gates recognized the need for witnesses and crime victims to trust local law enforcement to to enforce the law equally on behalf of everyone who lived in LA. Special Order 40 further stated that police officers could not "initiate police action with the objective of discovering the legal status of a person," and were not supposed to arrest or book anyone for violations of the US Immigration Code.

There are a number of reasons why full compliance with California Values Act SB54 is important. First of all, federal funds should be used for federal law enforcement. Local law enforcement funds should not be used to perform the duties of federal law enforcement agencies because that would be a misappropriation of funds and of duties. Second, it is clear that failure to comply with SB54 increases the danger to everyone in the community regardless of their legal status because it hinders local law enforcement's ability to interview witnesses or to address the issues of crime victims who would be afraid to come forward to report crimes. Third, the trauma that is inflicted upon immigrant communities is multifaceted that results in social, economic and cultural deficits to our communities in Ventura County. As a teacher with 20 years of experience working in Title 1 public schools I can tell you that I deal with the daily trauma that immigrant students and their families experience facing the daily fear of deportation of family members. This fear leads to lost days of school instruction which in turn leads to loss of funding for our local public schools. In addition, immigrant families fear to go to work and fear to go shop in local stores when they live under the fear of deportation which lowers the tax revenues, hurts local businesses and increases the need for public support for immigrants who are fearful of going to work.

Being in a county and city that has a large immigrant population we need to ensure that ALL of our local law enforcement agencies are in full compliance with California state law SB54 and cease any and all compliance with ICE. It is no coincidence that most of these transfers to ICE are from minority communities. The intent is not to protect our local communities from "violent criminals" but to instill fear in immigrant communities that are people of color. This morning a resident in Simi Valley witnessed two unmarked SUV's pull over two Latino gardeners on their way to work. There were no markings on their vehicle identifying them as ICE and the men who stepped out of the vehicles in full military gear with large weapons instilled fear into everyone in Simi Valley who had no way of knowing that these men were not just vigilantes harassing and threatening local residents because they had nothing identifying them as any type of law enforcement. Fearing for my own children's safety as Latinos and with full knowledge of the racial profiling that ICE agents do I kept them at home and wouldn't even allow them to walk around the block. This is the kind of fear and trauma that ICE law enforcement and local law enforcement cooperation with ICE permeates in communities throughout Ventura County.

Last but not least, as an elected official I am concerned with the possible lawsuits that could ensure costing our local taxpayers money to defend if local law enforcement cooperates with ICE and civil rights are violated. This comment is my own opinion as an elected city councilmember and does not represent the entire city council.

Thank You,

Ruth Luevanos

Simi Valley City Councilmember

For additional information and resources regarding the Coronavirus emergency, please visit venturacountyrecovers.org and simivalley.org/covid19.

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