



# VENTURA COUNTY TRUTH ACT FORUM

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Presented by:

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**ICE Out of Ventura County** is a coalition of legal and community organizations and individuals that was established in 2020 to advance immigrant rights and equal treatment of all Ventura County residents regardless of immigration status.

## Coalition Values

- Immigrants are integral, contributing, and essential community members in Ventura County.
- **All of our residents deserve to be treated equally by county authorities**, no matter what they look like, what language they speak, or where they were born.
- All residents deserve to be protected and **to feel trust accessing county services**.
- We share a common goal with the Sheriff's Office, the Board of Supervisors, and all Ventura County agencies: a safe community for all residents.



# ICE Out of Ventura County Coalition Members (as of 10/11/2022)



LATINX BAR ASSOCIATION



THE TORRES LAW FIRM  
— A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION —



# Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds (TRUTH) Act (AB-2792)

This bill seeks to address the lack of transparency and accountability by ensuring that all ICE deportation programs that depend on entanglement with local law enforcement agencies in California are subject to **meaningful public oversight**.

This bill also seeks to promote public safety and preserve limited local resources because **entanglement between local law enforcement and ICE undermines community policing strategies and drains local resources**.

# Sheriff's Office ICE Collaboration Policy

- The Ventura County Sheriff's Office continues to respond to ICE requests to facilitate the arrest and detention of community members by ICE.
- ICE notifications and transfers by the VCSO are not required by any law. These ongoing practices by the Sheriff's Office are entirely optional and voluntary. Further, ICE notifications and transfers affect individuals accused of many different kinds of crimes, including misdemeanors and juvenile proceedings.

# Sheriff's Office ICE Collaboration Policy

- The impact of these practices is not limited to undocumented people. **Green card holders, DACA recipients, and others can be also caught up in this web, including U.S. citizens who are mistakenly arrested, detained, and deported because immigration law is complex.**
- This practice results in **unequal treatment and a double punishment** imposed on immigrants who have completed their time in jail.
- Many counties have ceased facilitating ICE arrests, including Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Marin, Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, San Joaquin, San Francisco, and Humboldt.

# Concerns about VCSO's voluntary cooperation with ICE

- Sheriff Office coordination with ICE **fosters distrust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement**. Neighbors are **less likely to report crimes or cooperate with investigations**, which undermines public safety for all.
- Cooperation with ICE connects ICE's behavior to local police. ICE **disproportionately targets communities of color**, contradicting the Board of Supervisors' commitment to becoming a more racial equity and justice-oriented county.
- Citizens with identical criminal records as those transferred to ICE are released to freely return home. **Treating people differently based on immigration status alone creates a two-tiered, fundamentally unfair legal system**.
- Sheriff Office ICE cooperation needlessly exposes the county to **potential legal liability**. California Values Act (SB 54) violations have resulted in costly settlements in several other counties. A policy of non-cooperation with ICE will insulate Ventura County from such risks.

# Concerns about VCSO's voluntary cooperation with ICE

- Detention and deportation of parents **traumatizes children**. Kids are at risk of being placed in child protective services – thereby more likely to enter the criminal justice system themselves.
- Administration costs of VCSO's **optional, non-compulsory ICE cooperation is paid for by county taxpayers**, and *“the Sheriff's Office does not track the times for the tasks you are inquiring about, nor do we track cost associated with these tasks.”* Ventura County taxpayer dollars should be dedicated to the needs of our community.
- People transferred to ICE by VCSO are members of families and communities. They often are breadwinners who leave behind children and spouses who rely on them. **When parents are detained/deported, families are likely to go on public assistance.**

# Concerns about VCSO's voluntary cooperation with ICE

- Last year, the Sheriff's Office published a number of ICE pickups that was lower than the actual number and only corrected the record after the discrepancy was called out in a news report. The VCSO website currently reports five ICE pickups in 2021, but the California Attorney General database reports eleven.

## Why underreport this data?

- VCSO does not give attorneys case documentation.
- There are many documented reports of ICE engaging in inhumane, abusive, and cruel treatment of immigrants, and advocates have brought multiple lawsuits against ICE for these actions, while also pointing out that ICE is rarely held accountable for such maltreatment. **As the County of Ventura has affirmed the values of racial equity, safety, transparency, and accountability, any sort of cooperation or voluntary engagement of ICE is a violation of the County of Ventura's commitment to those values.**

## Progress since last year's forum:

- After the 2021 TRUTH Act Forum, the Ventura County Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group began to examine and discuss the issue of local policing and federal immigration enforcement.
- The PSREAG established a subcommittee to consider a potential resolution and policy recommendations. The Sheriff is a member of the subcommittee. The subcommittee undertook a broad review of relevant research.



# What does the research tell us?

## Key findings:

- Immigrants--both documented and undocumented-- do not threaten public safety and are less likely to commit crime than individuals born in the U.S.
- Immigrants have **lower recidivism rates** than individuals born in the U.S.
- Voluntary cooperation between local law enforcement with ICE decreases trust and cooperation between immigrants and law enforcement. Immigrants are less likely to report crime as witnesses and also as victims.
- **Crime is statistically significantly lower in counties that do not cooperate with ICE compared to counties who do.**
- This includes immigrant victims of domestic violence. One study shows that the adoption of policies to not cooperate **reduced domestic homicides among historically immigrant communities.**

# What does the research tell us?

## Key findings:

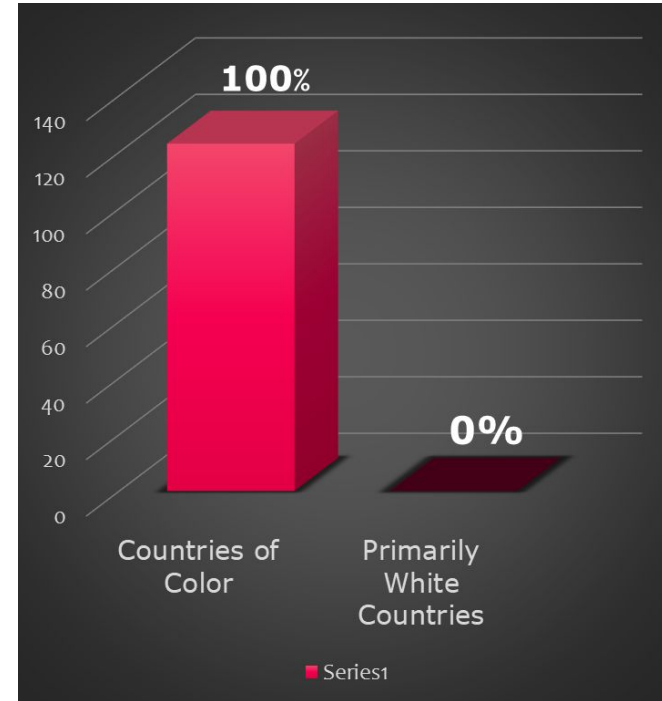
- Economies are stronger in counties with policies of non-cooperation with ICE.
- According to the 2020 census, 43.2% of the county population are Latinx - many of whom are not citizens or are part of mixed families - and is growing. Lack of cooperation and trust by a large part of the population makes us all less safe, regardless of our race or ethnicity.

## Structural Racism and Intentionality

- Policies and actions do not need to be intentional or deliberate to be considered structural racism.
- If the policies and practices have a disparate impact on individuals from protected classes they can still constitute structural racism.

## Harmful Treatment

- All notifications by VCSO were for people from **countries where the majority of residents are people of color.**
- **STRUCTURAL RACISM:** Laws, rules, or official policies that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race:



# Conclusions

Contrary to the sole reason and justification the VCSO has given for continuing its voluntary cooperation with ICE and the facilitating of transfers and notifications, **there is no demonstrated evidence that cooperating with ICE results in lower crime rates and thus does not make a community safer.**

In fact, the majority of research shows that crime rates are either unchanged or lower in communities that do not cooperate with ICE.

The present policies of cooperation with ICE and their disparate impact on people of color, may constitute “structural racism.”



# Recommendations

We call on the Sheriff's Office to stop voluntary, non-compulsory collaboration with ICE, including:

- (1) Stop notifying ICE of release dates.
- (2) Stop ICE transfers.
- (3) Stop ICE interviews at county facilities.
- (4) Stop including country of birth on their website.

# THANK YOU

## Questions?

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