

# Opinion

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FRIDAY

## OUR OPINION

# Cops not U.S. agents

## Idea could make all Latinos targets

He talked about "getting tough" with day laborers in his inaugural address more than a year ago, so it's no surprise Morristown Mayor Donald Cresitello is looking to give local police officers the power to enforce federal immigration laws. Among other things, that would mean up to 10 officers would have the power to check out contractors who may be hiring illegal aliens.

We agree that contractors who take advantage of illegal residents are more culpable than the workers themselves. At the same time, it's going to be hard to target contractors

### **OurView:**

Idea stems from Congress' failure to act.

without targeting the workers, who are here for the simple reason their services are needed.

The main problem with the mayor's idea is the criteria to be used by deputized police officers. How will they decide who may be an illegal alien? A person who looks Latino? A person speaking Spanish? Despite how the stated policy may read, we fear that the mayor's idea would end up targeting Latinos, many of whom are legal residents, or citizens.

The mayor is struggling with complaints that the mostly Latino day laborers milling around Morris Street give the town a bad image at a time when he's seeking to bring in high-end residential and commercial redevelopment. He'd love to move the day laborers elsewhere. And if his policy works, they may move elsewhere, but that's no answer to what is a regional, or actually, a national problem.

Which brings up the total failure of both parties in Washington to reform immigration law. Competing bills passed last year by the House and Senate have been allowed to languish.

It is that failure that prompts misguided local proposals such as these.