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## Yin, yang alive, well

### Dover, Morristown differ on aliens

Immigrants living in Dover and Morristown must feel like they're in two different countries.

In Morristown, Mayor Donald Cresitello is strongly pushing to enroll some town police in a federal immigration program that would empower the local cops to enforce immigration laws. Violators could wind up in federal hands and get deported to their native country. The mayor says his targets are contractors who hire and sometimes take financial advantage of immigrant day workers, some of whom are undocumented.

In Dover, there is no such proactive move toward deputizing police to pursue either day workers or their per diem employers, although both towns are de facto hosts to the sometimes off-the-books practice.

Diana Mejia of the immigrant advocacy organization Wind of the Spirit, based in Morristown, hinted at an organized effort to resist the plan for giving police power to enforce federal immigration laws. She also worries that illegals victimized by domestic violence might hesitate to call police in such a climate for fear of further complicating their lives with investigations of their residency status.

In Dover, immigrants are spared this aspect of fear of local authorities.

The deepening polarization over immigrant issues in Morristown led to a welcome sit-down hosted by the Morris County Human Relations Commission earlier this week. The commission wields little legal power but at least can serve as mediator to seek a reasonable compromise, particularly as the busiest months approach for the day laborers and their employers. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned from Dover's approach.

Let's hope the commission sticks with this challenge, even if some town and county politicians dive into polarized bunkers or melt into the silence of no man's land in between.

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