

March 27, 2007

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

Subject: Police Officers Deputized as Federal Immigration Agents

We, the undersigned community members of Morristown, are deeply concerned that Mayor Cresitello is seeking to have the local police officers deputized as federal immigration agents, "making the community one of the first in the nation to undertake such an effort."

We are strongly against such unnecessary initiative, and we believe that it violates the boundaries between criminal vs. civil law enforcement areas. In various cities in New Jersey the city mayors have specifically asked the local law enforcement not to work as immigration agents or ask undocumented immigrant workers and their families about their status. Morristown should follow on that pragmatic approach.

We, the undersigned community members of Morristown request that the authorities take the following urgent and necessary steps in order to improve the security, protect the rights of the residents of Morristown and surrounding areas, and clarify the role of the local police.

1. Oppose any action that discriminates on the basis of country of origin, religion, race, and gender or immigration status
2. Publicly make clear the town's commitment to defend the democratic and constitutional rights of all residents and their civil liberties
3. Recognize and celebrate racial and cultural diversity of the town's residents, families and students and their economic and social contributions, which is essential for the sustainability and smooth development of our region
4. Adopt a new resolution by the town council that will ask that the local police not to enforce federal immigration laws or act as immigration agents.

We believe that the priorities of the local police are to enforce local and state laws and protect the Morristown community to be safe, secure and stable. Undocumented immigrants are not criminals; they are human beings, hard-working people, trying to make ends meet. The proposed Morristown measure will drive them even more underground and panic the community. Such a measure, if enacted, will also sever ties between the local law enforcement and the immigrant community, which, according to New Jersey's law enforcement departments, is essential for maintaining law and order.

We ask you to discuss the proposed action in question with us, the local community organizations and advocates before its implementation. We believe, if enacted, this type of a measure would put the lives of numerous community members in serious jeopardy.

Thank you for your kind attention and consideration. We hope to have an opportunity to begin a conversation at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,