



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

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CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF

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CHIEF OF DETENTION

MEDIA STATEMENT

September 19, 2019

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In reference to comments made at Opening of USCIS facility on September 18, 2019

The Acting Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has chosen to join other national leaders to attack me and the citizens of Mecklenburg County while visiting our city today. Most of the citizens of our county understand and agree with the termination of the 287(g) program and my decision to not honor ICE detainers. The citizens elected me to the Office of Sheriff last year by an overwhelming majority and my stance on immigration issues has not waivered. I look forward to the day that all public safety professionals can sit down to discuss immigration issues and truly work towards a solution to a very broad issue. It's unfortunate that the federal government prefers to use me as a 'pawn' while pointing fingers and holding news conferences about an ineffective immigration system.

As a former attorney general, the Acting Director is aware that I have the discretion to not honor a voluntary agreement, which is not a failure to cooperate with another law enforcement agency to enforce the law. I took an oath and I'm required to uphold the oath of my Office and enforce the law. Not participating in 287(g) is not refusing to enforce the law. Only 4 out of 100 Sheriffs in NC participate in 287(g) – it's a *voluntary* program. Not honoring detainers is not refusing to enforce the law – detainers are requests for voluntary assistance. VOLUNTARY assistance. Meaning you can honor a detainer, but you DON'T HAVE TO. Public safety is and will always be my top priority for Mecklenburg County. It remains my sincere belief that the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office's current policies of not participating in 287(g) and not honoring ICE detainers are making our community safer.