



Chief's Message on Immigration

On January 25, 2017, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order regarding the deportation of immigrants living in this country illegally, implementing travel bans, and expanding the wall between our country and Mexico. The scope of the Executive Order remains unclear and the three-judge 9th Circuit Panel recently ruled against the Department of Justice and President Trump.

This unprecedented Executive Order is an important and sensitive issue and has created confusion, fear, and even panic in our multi-cultural population. As we continue with our daily responsibilities, it's imperative we recognize the apprehension some members of our community are feeling as well as a distrust of police they may now be experiencing. How we respond will define us.

Since the signing of this Executive Order, we've received many inquiries about our immigration enforcement actions. Our longstanding practice has not changed. We do not enforce Federal Immigration Law or policies. We shall not detain or question people based on their immigration status and we shall not participate in immigration round ups or other concentrated efforts to detain suspected undocumented individuals.

This isn't about politics. This is about the United States Constitution; the supreme law in our country. The Constitution was designed to preserve respect for certain fundamental principles of justice and to ensure a proper balance between the rights of the individual and the power of government.

While some argue that "We the People of the United States," refers only to legal citizens, the U.S. Supreme Court has consistently disagreed.

All of us have taken an oath to support the U.S. Constitution and we shall not waive from that. This stance is reinforced in our Number One Core Organizational Value. We at the Mount Vernon Police Department believe we must *preserve and advance the principles of democracy - we must not only respect, but also protect the rights guaranteed to each citizen by the Constitution*. This belief is the fabric of

our great organization. This belief guides us and defines our behavior and we shall not waiver from that.

Most importantly we believe in maintaining a transparent relationship with our community so they continue to trust us and feel comfortable calling and cooperating with police when they are the victim of a crime or a witness. This cooperation is critical in providing effective policing. It allows us to do our job without compromising public safety.

Since the early 1990's, we've worked hard as an organization to develop a positive and trusting relationship with all our community and those we serve; including undocumented individuals. This is the culture of the Mount Vernon Police Department and it will not change. There will be no disparate treatment to any member or visitor of our community.

We don't anticipate any change to our practices relating to the enforcement of immigration law or policies. Please share this with our community.

Any requests by ICE or any other federal agency for assistance regarding immigration enforcement should be directed to a command officer. The responsibility for the enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws clearly rests with the United States Customs and Border Protection Services; not the Mount Vernon Police Department. We remain focused on enforcing local and state laws and practices described in our Department Policy.

We are, indeed, protectors of the Constitution, guardians of democracy, and defenders of civil rights.

Thank you for your service.

Chief Jerry Dodd

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