



CITY MESSAGE ON LOCAL POLICE AND FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ISSUES

From time to time the City receives inquiries about immigration enforcement and the term “sanctuary city.” This memo is intended to answer questions about local police and federal immigration issues.

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. With that being said, the role of the Mount Vernon Police is to cooperate with federal law enforcement if requested and our Department will cooperate when asked.

Mount Vernon Police officers swear an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution and Criminal Laws of the State of Washington, and the ordinances of the City of Mount Vernon. Our local police have NO AUTHORITY to enforce federal immigration law. They have NO AUTHORITY over civil law such as building code violations, eviction, or debt collection. We remain focused on enforcing local and state laws and practices described in our Department Policy.

There is no question that some will politicize this topic. The authority of local police officers is not political, and the City will never condone any officer violating the Constitution or anyone’s civil rights.

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.

Since the early 1990’s, Mount Vernon Police have worked hard as an organization to develop a positive and trusting relationship with all in 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.

If you have questions about this issue feel free to contact the Mayor’s office at 360-336-6211 or the Mount Vernon Chief of Police at 360-336-6271.