

Sheriff Irwin Carmichael
Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office
801 E. 4th Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Sheriff Carmichael,

We, the undersigned organizations and community advocates, urge you to immediately end all formal collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including the voluntary 287g agreement and ICE detainers. These policies have caused great harm to our community, they undermine public safety, deprive individuals due process, waste county resources, and expose tax payers to possible legal settlements. After 12 years and more than 15,000 deportations in Mecklenburg County because of 287g, it's time to terminate the program and find solutions that promote community safety while protecting immigrant families.¹

Since the start of the 287g program in 2006, we've had thousands of deportations, many of them for minor infractions or misdemeanors. While your office continues to highlight a handful of cases of individuals with serious crimes, the fact is that a great majority of deportations under the 287g program are due to minor offences.² In fiscal year 2010, for example, more than 50% of ICE detainers in Mecklenburg were due to traffic violations.³ The Sheriff's office is deporting fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters, disrupting and separating families in the process.

We know these stories well, people like Holman Acosta who was arrested for not having a driver's licence while on his way home from his son's soccer game. Holman was forced to leave the country and is now living in Honduras, thousands of miles away from his U.S. citizen family. Alejandro Lopez was arrested on his way to work for not having a driver's licence and placed in deportation proceedings because of 287g. Gus Zamudio, a DACA student from Northwest School of the Arts, was convicted of a misdemeanor and forced to accept a "voluntary departure" instead of fighting his case from Stewart Detention Center, known for its human rights violations. Gus was not able to walk in his graduation and is now living alone in Mexico.

¹ Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Department, ICE Report 1/29/2018, <http://www.mecksheriff.com/Mecklenburg/pdf/icereport.pdf>

² Hannah Gill and Mai Thi Nguyen, *The 287(g) Program: The Costs and Local Immigration Enforcement in North Carolina Communities*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010.

³ Randy Capps, *Delegation and Divergence: A Study of 287(g) State and Local Immigration Enforcement*. Migration Policy Institute, 2011.

The 287g program does not improve relations between immigrant communities and law enforcement, in fact it creates distrust and fear. Only 60 of the 3,007 counties in the United States have 287g agreements.⁴ The overwhelming majority of law enforcement agencies across the nation have declined to participate in the program. Additionally, the program runs counteractive to the efforts of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department to build trust with the immigrant community.

Legal actions have been taken against the program in several jurisdictions across the country, exposing localities to pay costly settlements, all covered with taxpayer dollars.⁵ Besides the possible liability, 287g focuses the county's scarce resources in a strategy that has not been independently proven to decrease crime. While the federal government covers some of the cost associated with this program, localities cover most of the expenses. In the first year of the program, the estimated cost of 287g in Mecklenburg County was \$5.3 million, it is unclear how much money it has cost taxpayers since then because the Sheriff's office has refused to publicize this information.⁶

It is because of these reasons that we demand that as a public servant tasked with the responsibility to protect and serve the community of Mecklenburg County, you terminate the voluntary 287g program and refuse to honor ICE holds in county jails. These demands are in line with the 2015 Charlotte's Immigration Integration Task Force recommendations.⁷ We believe that Mecklenburg County should be a place where all people feel welcomed, safe, and protected.

Sincerely,

Comunidad Colectiva

⁴ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. *Delegation of Immigration Section 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act*, 01/10/18. <https://www.ice.gov/287g>

⁵ American Immigration Council. *The 287(g) Program: An Overview*, 2017.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/287g-program-immigration>

⁶ Hannah Gill and Mai Thi Nguyen, *The 287(g) Program: The Costs and Local Immigration Enforcement in North Carolina Communities*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010

⁷ Charlotte City Government. *Immigration Integration Task Force Report*, 2015.

<http://charlottenc.gov/international-relations/inltcommunity/Documents/IITF%20Report%20with%20Appendices.pdf>

1. ACLU of North Carolina
2. Action NC
3. Alerta Migratoria
4. American Friends Service Committee
5. Antoine Ensley, Candidate for Mecklenburg County Sheriff
6. Asian Americans for Advancing Justice
7. Barbara Randolph, Co Chair WEMAD Immigration Committee
8. CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities
9. Camino Church
10. Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
11. Charlotte Democratic Socialists of America
12. Charlotte Latin Pride
13. Charlotte Pride
14. Charlotte Women's March
15. Charlotte Uprising
16. Chinese Progressive Association
17. Educate to Engage LLC
18. El Centro Hispano, Inc.
19. Emily Zimmern, Co-Chair Charlotte's Immigration Integration Task Force 2015
20. Familias Unidas
21. Freedom Inc
22. Garry McFadden, Candidate for Mecklenburg County Sheriff
23. HANA Center Chicago
24. Indivisible NC District 9
25. Jamie Hildreth, Candidate for County Commissioner At-Large
26. Justice & Respect in the Reinforcing Industry Coalition (JRRIC)
27. Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles
28. Latin American Coalition
29. Latino Commission On AIDS
30. LGBTQ Democrats of Mecklenburg County
31. LGBTQ+ Faculty/Staff Caucus at UNC Charlotte
32. Libre
33. Meck PAC (Mecklenburg LGBTQ Political Action Committee)
34. National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
35. National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
36. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
37. National Organization for Women (N.O.W) Charlotte
38. New South Progressives
39. North Carolina Asian Americans Together
40. Ray McKinnon, Candidate for County Commissioner At-Large
41. Rev. Brandon Lazarus, Senior Pastor, Memorial United Methodist Church
42. Rev. Leach, Senior Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte

43. Righteousness First Social Solutions, LLC
44. Safety, Accountability, Fairness, Equity (SAFE) Coalition NC
45. Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)
46. Siembra NC
47. Sil Ganzo, Founder of *ourBRIDGE for Kids*
48. Southeast Asian Coalition (SEAC)
49. Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice
50. Students for Education Reform National
51. Students for Education Reform NC
52. Susan B. Harden, Candidate for County Commissioner District 5
53. The People's Campaign
54. UNC Charlotte's Center for Holocaust, Genocide & Human Rights Studies
55. Unidad Nacional de Hispanos Aliados (UNISAL)
56. VAYLA