

May 17, 2017

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

We, the undersigned law enforcement officers, write to express our concern with legislation resembling the Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement (SAFE) Act, which was previously introduced in the 113th Congress as H.R. 2278, and The Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act, introduced in the 114th Congress as H.R. 1148. By requiring state and local law enforcement to become immigration agents, such legislation distracts local law enforcement from our core public safety mission.

Immigration enforcement is, first and foremost, a federal responsibility. Immigration enforcement at the state and local levels diverts limited resources from public safety. State and local law enforcement agencies face tight budgets and should not be charged with the federal government's role in enforcing federal immigration laws. Rather than apprehending and removing immigrants who have no criminal background or affiliation and are merely seeking to work or reunite with family, it is more important for state and local law enforcement to focus limited resources and funding on true threats to public safety and security.

Additionally, state and local law enforcement need the trust of our communities to do our primary job, which is apprehending criminals and protecting the public. Immigrants should feel safe in their communities and comfortable calling upon law enforcement to report crimes, serving as witnesses, and calling for help in emergencies. This improves community policing and safety for everyone.

Legislation like the SAFE Act threatens to undermine trust between immigrant communities and state and local law enforcement. When state and local law enforcement agencies are required to enforce federal immigration laws, undocumented residents may become fearful that they, or people they know, will be exposed to immigration officials and are less likely to cooperate. This undermines trust between law enforcement and these communities, creating breeding grounds for criminal enterprises.

Rather than requiring state and local law enforcement agencies to engage in additional immigration enforcement activities, Congress should focus on overdue reforms to allow state and local law enforcement to focus their resources on true threats — dangerous criminals and criminal organizations. We believe that state and local law enforcement must work together with federal authorities to protect our communities and that we can best serve our communities by leaving the enforcement of immigration laws to the federal government.

We continue to recognize that what our broken system truly needs is a broad-based legislative solution that deals with the system as a whole.

Sincerely,

Chief Chris Magnus, Tucson, AZ

Retired Chief Roberto Villaseñor, Tucson, AZ

Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles, CA

Chief Dwight Henninger, Vail, CO

Sheriff Joe Pelle, Boulder County, CO

Sheriff Bill McCarthy, Polk County, IA

Mark Prosser, Public Safety Director, Storm Lake, IA

Sheriff Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County, IA

Chief Mike Tupper, Marshalltown, IA

Chief William Bones, Boise, ID

Retired Chief Ron Teachman, South Bend, IN

Retired Chief James Hawkins, Garden City, KS

Deputy Chief Jose Salcido, Wichita, KS

Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea, MA

Chief Thomas Manger, Montgomery County, MD

Chief Janeé Harteau, Minneapolis, MN

Chief Todd Axtell, Saint Paul, MN

Chief Richard Biehl, Dayton, OH

Chief Cel Rivera, Lorain, OH

Sheriff Adell Dobey, Edgefield County, SC

Chief Art Acevedo, Houston, TX

Sheriff Edward Gonzalez, Harris County, TX

Retired Chief Chris Burbank, Salt Lake City, UT

Deputy Chief Carmen Best, Seattle, WA

Assistant Chief Randy Gaber, Madison, WI

Chief Mike Koval, Madison, WI

Chief Todd Thomas, Appleton, WI

cc: Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, Jr. (WI-05)

Rep. Lamar Smith (TX-21)

Rep. Steve Chabot (OH-01)

Rep. Darrell Issa (CA-49)

Rep. Steve King (IA-04)

Rep. Trent Franks (AZ-08)

Rep. Louie Gohmert (TX-01)

Rep. Jim Jordan (OH-04)

Rep. Ted Poe (TX-02)

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT-03)

Rep. Tom Marino (PA-10)

Rep. Trey Gowdy (SC-04)

Rep. Raúl Labrador (ID-01)

Rep. Blake Farenthold (TX-27)

Rep. Doug Collins (GA-09)

Rep. Ron DeSantis (FL-06)

Rep. Ken Buck (CO-04)
Rep. John Ratcliffe (TX-04)
Rep. Martha Roby (AL-02)
Rep. Matt Gaetz (FL-01)
Rep. Mike Johnson (LA-04)
Rep. Andy Biggs (AZ-05)
Rep. Jerry Nadler (NY-10)
Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18)
Rep. Steve Cohen (TN-09)
Rep. Hank Johnson, Jr. (GA-04)
Rep. Ted Deutch (FL-22)
Rep. Luis Gutierrez (IL-04)
Rep. Karen Bass (CA-37)
Rep. Cedric Richmond (LA-02)
Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)
Rep. David Cicilline (RI-01)
Rep. Eric Swalwell (CA-15)
Rep. Ted Lieu (CA-33)
Rep. Jamie Raskin (MD-08)
Rep. Pramila Jayapal (WA-07)
Rep. Brad Schneider (IL-10)