

Voces de la Frontera: Milwaukee restores police protections for immigrants and refugees

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MILWAUKEE – On Thursday night, the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission approved changes to the Milwaukee Police Department Standard Operating Procedure on immigration status that restored important protections for immigrants, refugees, and people of color. Hundreds of community members packed Milwaukee’s City Hall to rally and attend a meeting of the Fire and Police Commission to urge city leaders to restore the protections.

Thurdasy’s vote amended new MPD policies implemented on July 6th that had been passed with no community input or meaningful oversight by the FPC, which is charged with overseeing significant changes to police procedures. The changes would have increased collaboration with immigration agents. The FPC’s vote followed public outcry after the changes were revealed. Voces de la Frontera, the League of Latin American Citizens – Wisconsin, and Aldmeran José Pérez worked with the Mayor’s Office, the FPC, and the MPD to ensure the protections were restored.

“It is so important that these protections have been restored,” said Voces de la Frontera member Josefa Puerta. “I was a victim of domestic violence, and the police helped me a lot when that happened. If the police were going to remove these protections, many people who were in my situation would have been afraid to call

them. If we cannot call the police, there will be many more crimes committed. So it's very important that our struggle won the return of these protections. Our community will remain vigilant and keep fighting.”

“As a city, we need to express radical hospitality toward everyone, particularly toward immigrants, refugees, and marginalized community members,” said Pastor Joe Ellwanger of Milwaukee Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH). “We need to have courage in Milwaukee, the courage to practice radical hospitality. We have to take a stand.”