

# ACLU: Condemns Waukesha County Sheriff's decision to renew Wisconsin's only direct partnership with ICE

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Waukesha County Sheriff Eric Severson has confirmed to the ACLU that despite community opposition, on July 1 he renewed his department's agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to use deputies in the Waukesha County Jail as immigration agents. Under an agreement called a "287(g) agreement" because it's authorized by section 287(g) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, federal immigration authorities deputize local law enforcement personnel to enforce federal immigration law.

"As he did when he first applied for 287(g), the Sheriff renewed the agreement to be part of Pres. Trump's deportation machine very quietly and without public input," stated Tim Muth, staff attorney for the ACLU of Wisconsin.

In April the ACLU of Wisconsin requested records from the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department in an attempt to learn how this partnership is operating, yet the Department refused to produce a single document until after the Sheriff had already extended his partnership with ICE. Thus the 287(g) agreement was renewed without any public oversight.

However, the ACLU has learned that the Sheriff's Department will hold a "steering committee" meeting on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019, at 2:30 pm at the Department offices, 515 W. Moreland Boulevard, Waukesha, WI 53188. The ACLU will attend this meeting and urges concerned community members to also attend to question the Sheriff's agreement with ICE.

The Sheriff's Department last held a "public" meeting to discuss the 287(g) program in September 2018. Because the Department buried the notice of that meeting deep in the Waukesha County website and did not invite any concerned citizens or organizations, no members of the public attended.

In October 2017, the ACLU of Wisconsin discovered and publicized the previously undisclosed application by the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department to participate in the 287(g) program of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"). Particularly troubling was this statement by the Sheriff in the cover letter to his application:

"The Waukesha County Sheriff's Office is willing, prepared and committed to assist in [ICE's] effort to investigate, apprehend and detain aliens pursuant to the statutes....My office and staff will make this program a priority in our jail and welcome additional ICE partnerships."

Although large swaths of the local community objected, Sheriff Eric Severson proceeded forward and signed the 287(g) agreement with ICE on February 16, 2018, and then renewed it on July 1 of this year.

Waukesha County is the only county in Wisconsin to have entered a 287(g) agreement with ICE. Renewing that agreement continues the Waukesha Sheriff's Department's misguided path of lending its deputies to the federal government as immigration enforcers when the Department should be focused on improving relations with the immigrant community in Waukesha and other local needs.

Because the agreement can be terminated at any time, the ACLU of Wisconsin continues to call on Sheriff Severson to end his Department's relationship with ICE. "We will continue to shine a light on the actions of the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department in this partnership with the ICE deportation machine," stated attorney Muth.