

Voces de la Frontera Calls on Public Officials to Advance Proposal to Amend SOP130 to Prevent the Milwaukee Police Dept. from Partnering with ICE

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Immediate Release

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Voces and community members will rally at City Hall and Attend a Public Hearing before the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission

What: Press conference, protest of MPD and ICE collaboration, and a public hearing attendance before the Fire and Police Commission.

When: Rally and Press Conference at 4:30 pm., Today, Thursday, October 17, 2019. Public Hearing at 5:30 pm.

Where: City Hall Rotunda, Milwaukee, WI.

Voces de la Frontera has issued a press statement in response to the Milwaukee Police Departments press release on October 8, 2019. The full statement is available on our website, [click here](#), or read below. Links to FAQ's on SOP130, video coverage of Jose De la Cruz-Espinosa's arrest, and the family's Go-Fund me page are included below.

Voces de la Frontera calls on the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission (FPC) at its Oct. 17, 2019 meeting to take all steps necessary to advance the proposal to amend Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) rules to stop them from acting as a partner with the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Our proposal is simple. At its core is that **unless a valid judicial warrant has**

been issued for an individual, MPD shall not use any resources for immigration enforcement. Judicial warrants must come from a judge, not from ICE or the Department of Homeland Security. This does not prevent MPD from doing its job in responding to a situation, but ensures an individual's constitutional rights to due process are protected.

Immigration is a federal issue, not one for local police. Federal law is very clear on this.

When immigrants fear that contact with MPD might lead to a confrontation with ICE, they are much less likely to call 911 to report a crime or to otherwise cooperate with MPD and makes Milwaukee less safe for everyone.

When MPD assists ICE, it wastes precious police resources in a city with a very tight budget. This includes the city having to pay out millions in costly lawsuits because of MPD practices of racial profiling and a lack of meaningful community collaboration.

Our recommendations to amend MPD's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) form 130 were submitted to Milwaukee Chief Alfonso Morales and the FPC in May 2019. FPC Policy Chair Nelson Soler directed the chief to meet with Voces and create a working group that would come back to the FPC policy committee with a joint recommendation. Contrary to the MPD's recent press release, MPD, under Chief Morales' leadership, has not collaborated with Voces and allied organizations in this process. Indeed he has stated that they will continue to cooperate with federal agencies (i.e., ICE) when called upon and stated at the FPC public hearing on his potential re-appointment "policy does not matter to build community trust." Shockingly, at a meeting with 200 people protesting the delays on the recommended changes to SOP 130 and close to 40 people who testified on the need for this change to build community trust.

We have also run into numerous delays in the FPC process itself. It's time for the FPC to act promptly so that more families are not hurt by a current policy that allows ICE to call on MKE MPD to tear apart families and create more fear of local law enforcement.

As has been overwhelmingly expressed at the FPC public hearings on this matter, we call on the FPC to schedule a special meeting to take up this matter swiftly.

The police detention of Jose Alejandro De la Cruz-Espinosa on Sept. 23 and his transfer to ICE in the absence of a judicial warrant highlights the need for this safeguard in the current SOP 130 policy.

ICE and MKE MPD have mischaracterized Jose De la Cruz-Espinosa as a dangerous person. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He has a dated and very minor misdemeanor record. That being said, the probation parole violation they allege is that he was driving his children to school without a license. The reality is that because of ICE's failure to secure a judicial warrant, they instead chose to enlist the support of the MKE police department to terrorize this working-class family. The couple had overcome poverty, established a small construction business, and had finally secured funds to try to adjust his immigration status.

As Kristine De la Cruz, Jose's US citizen wife and member of the Oneida Nation said, "We've been together for sixteen years, he's my best friend, loving father and loyal friend to many. He's a hard-working man that does all that he can to support our family. ICE and the Milwaukee Police Department are treating my family and I like we're nothing. They took away someone's father, our provider."

Explaining how this incident affects her family, Kristine shared, "My daughters don't understand any of this, and it hurts me so much when I think of them in the car screaming for their daddy, unable to hug him goodbye, as he was taken from our lives. My daughter had a breakdown in school yesterday. How are they supposed to process the trauma of our family being separated?"

Jose is still in ICE custody.

The incident received considerable press, and videos of the arrest are publically available. Milwaukee, at its best, is a city of inclusion. The current policy divides the community and makes it weaker. We cannot allow the nightmare of what is happening to the De la Cruz family to happen to another family.

We call on the FPC to ensure that this message of a welcoming city is reflected in our police immigration policy and aligns with the policies of Milwaukee County Sheriff Earnell Lucas, who has made it clear that Deputy Sheriffs are not an arm of ICE. The Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff Directive No. J2019-03 on ICE Detainer Requests states that "the Milwaukee County Jail shall not hold any inmate in custody based upon an ICE detainer request, absent a valid judicial warrant."

As the xenophobic and racist Trump Administration escalates their campaign against people of color and immigrant families, it is imperative that the Mayor and the Fire and Police Commission make their decision to reappoint Chief Morales to his current role contingent on his ability to genuinely engage with the community and support changes to the SOP130 that ensure city resources will not be used to do ICE's work and break up families.

[Link to Voces video of MPD collaboration with ICE in the detention of Jose De la Cruz](#)

[Link to recorded footage from inside the vehicle during arrest](#)

[Link to FAQ on SOP130](#)

[Click here to visit Go-Fund-Me page](#)