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Welcoming Community Policy - Please Vote in Favor

1 message

Victoria Grafflin <vcongraff@hotmail.com>

Tue, Nov 19, 2024 at 10:51 PM

To: "Selectboard@natickma.org" <Selectboard@natickma.org>

Dear Members of the Board,

I urge you to support the draft Welcoming Community Policy posted earlier this month. The policy is a thoughtfully crafted compromise that protects immigrant communities while ensuring our compliance with state and federal law. It is also very similar to other policies in many other municipalities in Massachusetts.

This policy is critical for ensuring that our town employees are not conscripted into enforcing federal immigration law at a time when our resources are already limited. The policy also assures immigrant communities that they can utilize town resources, including reporting crimes to law enforcement, without fear of immigration repercussions.

Any upcoming program of mass deportation will lean heavily on local law enforcement for support. That is why we must have policies in place now that reflect Natick's inclusive values. Therefore, I strongly encourage you not to give in to any calls to water down the policy with additional exceptions that could be used to undercut the policy's goals—the town simply should not be in the business of enforcing federal immigration law.

There are so many things that could go wrong if municipal employees participate in federal immigration enforcement activities.

- Municipal employees lack proper training to assess who may or may not be in the US without proper authorization;
- A Natick employee could accidentally or overzealously mis-identify a person as being in the US without proper authorization. The consequences of such an error could include costly lawsuits that the Town would be liable to defend against and possibly have to pay damages for;
- Because there are people in our town and throughout the country who have applied for asylum or some other form of residency and are lawfully allowed to be in the US while awaiting their hearings, it is very likely that mass deportation efforts will sweep up people who have a legal right to remain in the country while their applications are pending - if local employees are also seen as immigration enforcement agents, it may prevent people with a legal right to be here from seeking medical care for their sick children, shelter from domestic abuse, or recourse against employers who withhold wages. These negative impacts will likely happen with or without Natick Town employees participating in enforcing

federal immigration laws, but there is also a possibility that immigrants in our community will understand that they should not fear persecution by local officials and can seek help when needed, if Natick adopts a policy that would not allow its employees to participate in federal immigration enforcement activities.

- Natick Town employees have busy jobs and should not be tapped as additional resources for the federal government. It is totally inappropriate for municipal employees to be doing the job of a federal agency.

I strongly urge you to vote yes on the draft policy.

Sincerely,

Victoria Grafflin