



Billy Walsh <bwalsh@natickma.org>

Please Adopt the Welcoming Immigration Policy!

1 message

'Laura Gillenwater' via Select Board <selectboard@natickma.org>

Wed, Nov 27, 2024 at 12:37 PM

Reply-To: Laura Gillenwater <lagil@comcast.net>

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

Dear Members of the Board,

I am a resident of Natick and am writing to urge you to vote to adopt the Welcoming Immigration Policy discussed at the Board's meeting on November 20. The policy is thoroughly vetted, compliant with the law, and provides peace of mind to Natick's residents and visitors of all immigration statuses.

From a practical standpoint, Natick's resources are better spent elsewhere than detecting and reporting on undocumented immigrants. From a moral standpoint, I'm uncomfortable with the idea of getting to the point where people have to "show their papers," as that's often been associated with bad political/societal situations, historically. Also, it would be likely to result in some degree of ethnic profiling, potentially resulting in the harassment of even those immigrants who are here completely legally.

Sadly, the statewide Republican Party has decided to use the Board's consideration of this carefully drafted policy as an opportunity to push a national anti-immigrant political agenda, and I know the Board has been flooded with inflammatory form letters and social media posts raising alarmist talking points about the policy. The reality is right there in black and white, so I know that what this policy would do is very clear and very modest: it would prohibit town employees from asking people about their immigration status or enforcing federal immigration law except where state or federal law requires them to do so. As Members of the Board and the Police Chief pointed out at the meeting, this is simply a codification of existing practice and makes sense from a law enforcement, practical, and moral standpoint.

The state party's talking points warn of dire consequences that go well beyond the text of the policy, such as an influx of undocumented people using town resources or a sudden spike in crime. Yet, we don't have to speculate because Natick is far from the first municipality in Massachusetts to adopt a similar policy. For example, as a Member of the Board pointed out during the meeting, this policy is modeled on Acton's policy, which was adopted over seven years ago, in October of 2017. Since that time, Acton has not seen a spike in crime or an unexpected surge in population. You could likely find versions of that story in every municipality that has adopted these policies—the scare tactics and anecdotes fall apart in the face of actual world facts.

As much as the statewide Republican Party wants to make this a statewide or even national issue, this has always been about All of Us in Natick and our values. As Select Board Members repeatedly pointed out, this policy results from a multi-year process that has engaged stakeholders from many perspectives and aspects of town government. It's time to finish the job and not let political attacks get in the way of doing what's right.

Please vote to support the policy at your upcoming meeting.

Thank you,

Laura Gillenwater
10 Lowell Road