



Billy Walsh <bwalsh@natickma.org>

Recognizing the Values and Diversity of Our Community Policy

1 message

Anne Continelli <anne.continelli.natick@gmail.com>
To: selectboard@natickma.org

Sun, Dec 1, 2024 at 1:52 PM

Dear Natick Select Board,

I am writing to express my thoughts on the Recognizing the Values and Diversity of Our Community Policy.

It appears that everything this policy mandates is already mandated by state law. It is not creating any new laws, it is simply asserting that our municipal employees must follow state laws. Chief Hicks expressed this himself in his SB address. That being the case, there is no need for an official policy. The police chief is more than capable of sending out a memo to his officers summarizing the state laws and making sure they understand them, possibly with a follow-up staff meeting.

If the SB wants to ensure that Natick police and other town employees are aware of these laws and are expected to obey them, all they must do is ask upper management to convey this to their teams. Plain and simple.

It has been suggested that a formal policy is going to send a clear message to migrants that they are welcome here. I disagree. People don't go on town government websites to read policies. If you want to send the message that Natick welcomes migrants, start programs. I can put you in touch with people from MIRA, which is an umbrella organization that connects people with the smaller, grassroots organizations that really make the difference in this world. Programs that help migrants with paperwork, with getting jobs, etc.

Policy is critical if we are devoid of any kind of already existing law. For example, MIRA fought hard for tuition equity to allow in-state tuition to be expanded to residents who are not yet citizens. THAT is when you work for policy. This is not. This policy doesn't change anything, it doesn't make something legal that wasn't before, or make something illegal that was previously legal. This is a waste of time, and quite divisive, as it reeks of sanctuary city (though I know it's not). All that is being accomplished is widening a fissure instead of closing it. Let's instead put our energies into starting volunteer programs for migrants in our area. We have people who can help with tax preparation, we have people who can help with translation, etc.

As a society, we are too enamored with layering regulation on top of policy on top of law. This contributes to government congestion, bureaucracy, and inefficiency. We need to stop. Grassroots volunteer programs and nonprofits are far more helpful to migrants trying to make a new life for themselves in this land of opportunity. If we really want to help them, we should put our energies there. I am willing to volunteer my time and skills to help with any proposed projects.

Sincerely,

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