

Message from Interim Sheriff Rob Giordano about working with ICE in the jail  
August 10, 2017

Hello Sonoma County,

On Monday, August 14, the Sheriff's Office will release a revised policy that affects how it cooperates with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in the jail. The policy results in less cooperation with ICE and will be implemented on Friday, August 18. Generally, the jail will respond to ICE's inmate release date requests only when the inmate has a previous conviction for a serious crime. These crimes are those listed in the TRUST Act, plus another 14 crimes that are not in the TRUST Act but still present a threat to our community's safety. You can read the TRUST Act here:

[https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=7282.5.&lawCode=GOV](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=7282.5.&lawCode=GOV).

Keep in mind that inmate release dates are public record under State law. Anyone can call and request a release date and, if it's available, we must provide it.

There has been a great deal of misinformation put out into the community about our promise to change this policy. I'd like to clarify how we got here.

The Sheriff's Office mission is protecting public safety in Sonoma County. We are neutral on Federal immigration policy. How we cooperate with ICE in the jail is based on our duty to protect everyone in Sonoma County, regardless of immigration status. The intent of the policy change is to ensure we respond to ICE only for people with prior convictions of serious crimes, include comments from our community and Board of Supervisors, and reflect my professional expertise and commitment to the people of Sonoma County.

Since January 2017, most of the public inquiries to the Sheriff have been about our immigration policy. Earlier this year we were waiting for SB 54 to proceed through the State Legislature to avoid changing our immigration policy multiple times in a short time period. However, Sheriff Freitas decided to change this policy after listening to the community's concerns and considering specific recommendations from the Director of the Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review and Oversight (IOLERO). Sheriff Freitas advised the IOLERO Director of his intent on May 1. That same day, the Director of IOLERO announced the Sheriff's Office immigration policy change and it hit the local media.

Since May 1, members of the Sheriff's Office have been diligently working on revising this policy. The time it takes to revise a policy can be frustrating, even for those writing it. This is a complex issue that's so important to many people in our community, regardless of their opinion on Federal immigration policies. We've been carefully considering which crimes should be included and how it should be implemented in the jail. Two factors slowed down the process. First, we learned the anticipated computer system to implement the policy change would be too expensive and had to adjust our implementation strategy. Second, Sheriff Freitas unexpectedly announced his retirement in early July for health reasons and I became Interim Sheriff on August 1. This Office's policies are indicative of the bond the Sheriff has with his/her community. As the new Interim Sheriff, I had a duty to weigh in on the upcoming policy changes.

I am confident this policy protects the safety of our community's residents. We will do everything we can to keep convicted criminals out of our neighborhoods. Everyone in Sonoma County, including undocumented immigrants, should be reassured that the Sheriff's Office is here to protect and serve you.

Community engagement is a high priority for the Sheriff's Office. We've been proactively educating and reaching out to our community about immigration since November 2016 and will continue to do so. I'm open to hearing feedback about this revised policy and may update it in the future. You can find our immigration information at <https://www.sonomasheriff.org/sheriffs-response-to-immigration-issue/>. You are welcome to contact [sheriff-outreach@sonoma-county.org](mailto:sheriff-outreach@sonoma-county.org) if you would like a Sheriff's Office speaker at your community group, school, etc. I also encourage you to sign up for news releases at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) and follow us on Facebook (@sonoma.sheriff) to stay informed on Sheriff's Office issues.

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