



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

LATINO AFFAIRS COMMISSION

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

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April 5, 2012

Chair John Leopold and members of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean St. Suite 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Secure Communities Program / Assembly Bill 1081- TRUST Act

Dear Members of the Board:

As you know, on April 5, 2011, your Board passed a resolution to support Assembly Bill 1081 (known as "the TRUST Act"), which would have allowed for local jurisdictions to "opt in" to the Federal Secure Communities Program while still ensuring that victims of crime are protected, prevent racial profiling and prioritize public safety. The Secure Communities program was intended to deport those non-citizens charged with dangerous crimes; however statistics show that the program is casting too wide a net and resulting in the deportation of people not in that category. For the entire year 2011 to the present, the Latino Affairs Commission has heard from many community members, groups, and immigration attorneys about how mothers, fathers, and other family members are being deported without notice, causing devastating impacts on the families in our community. In addition, as we informed the Board last year in our letter in May 2011, the Secure Communities Program is jeopardizing the trust we need immigrant communities to have with our law enforcement and government as a whole.

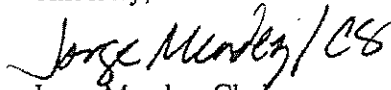
In December 2011, your Board requested the Sheriff to convene a task force and return with a report related to the Secure Communities Program. You asked that a few Latino Affairs Commissioners and others be included in that review process. In accordance with your request, the Sheriff formed a task force and three members of the Latino Affairs Commission attended several task force meetings, along with Doug Keegan, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County Immigration Project. On March 14th, the Latino Affairs Commission met to review the Sheriff's proposed assessment tool for determining which persons the Sheriff's Office should release following arrest, and which should be kept in custody pending arraignment. Along with the Sheriff's

presentation, we also heard from many local immigration attorneys and immigrant family advocates regarding the devastating impacts of the Secure Communities Program on our local community. At this meeting, our Commission thanked the Sheriff for listening and taking into consideration our thoughts and concerns about the assessment tool, but voted not to support the assessment tool as presented because it did not do enough to minimize the many negative aspects of this program.

Assembly Bill 1081, known as the TRUST Act, seeks to reform California's participation in the Federal Secure Communities Program and provide essential safeguards to address serious concerns raised over the program's detrimental effects on public safety, community policing and civil liberties. AB 1081 has been amended several times since your Board voted to endorse it last year and on September 9, 2011, was ordered to the inactive file. However, it is our understanding that further amended language has now been proposed for the bill but that the language is not yet in print. The Commission anticipates seeking a renewed statement of support for AB 1081's reform efforts if the amended bill is in keeping with the earlier versions.

We thank you for taking this issue seriously and for involving the Latino Affairs Commissioners in this important discussion regarding the immigrant families in our county.

Sincerely,


Jorge Mendez, Chair
Latino Affairs Commission

cc: Clerk of the Board
Personnel Director
Sheriff
Santa Cruz County Immigration Project