

February 27, 2009

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

CC: President Barack Obama; Assistant Secretary Torres

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

As organizations representing people of faith and conscience, we write to express grave concerns about the discriminatory and inhumane actions of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Phoenix, Arizona, and to call for a rescindment of the 287(g) agreement which he has used as justification for racial profiling and the oppression of immigrant communities.

On February 4, 2009, more than 200 immigrants wearing black and white prison stripes were shackled and marched through the streets of Phoenix from a county jail to "Tent City," a detainment camp where Phoenix Sheriff Joe Arpaio is segregating immigrants from the general inmate population. According to Southern Poverty Law Center, marchers were guarded by "at least 50 Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) deputies, wearing body armor and combat fatigues, armed with shotguns and automatic rifles. At least two canine units were present; a Sheriff's Department helicopter hovered overhead." All this to escort a group in which, for many, their sole crime was lacking documentation.

But this is just the latest in a string of actions by Sheriff Arpaio calculated to humiliate immigrants and to garner media attention.

In November of 2008, the *Arizona Republic* released data from Arpaio's arrest logs of several neighborhood sweeps, which showed that "deputies arrested more Latinos than non-Latinos during each of the operations, even when the patrols were held in mostly White areas." In January 2009, two of Arpaio's deputies donned ski masks and detained a woman late at night in front of her two children, ages four and six, leaving them terrified in the custody of a relative.

Sheriff Arpaio's tactics in enforcing immigration laws have not only created a climate of fear, they have also cost Maricopa County money and effective law enforcement. In the past eight years, the county's budget has skyrocketed. Violent crimes, homicides, and response times to 911 calls have increased. There are over 40,000 outstanding felony warrants in Maricopa County, a fact which has prompted Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon to remark that Sheriff Arpaio is creating "a sanctuary county for felons."

In light of Sheriff Arpaio's abuse of the power invested in him by the Department of Homeland Security, we request that you rescind Maricopa County's agreements with the Department of Homeland Security under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Asian American Justice Center
Asian Law Caucus
Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Immigration Equality
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Japanese American Citizens League
Methodist Federation for Social Action
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
National Employment Law Center
National Federation of Asian American United Methodists
National Immigrant Solidarity Network
Sojourners
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Church General Commission on Religion and Race
United Methodist Task Force on Immigration
Wider Church Ministries, United Church of Christ

ARIZONA

American Jewish Committee, Arizona Chapter, Phoenix
Rev. Dr. Ken Brown, District Executive, Pacific Southwest District/ Unitarian
Universalist Association
Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, Bishop of the Phoenix Area of The United Methodist
Church
Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, Southwest Conference Minister, United Church of Christ
Rev. Diane Dowgiert, Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix Social Action Committee
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona
Rev. Julianne Lewis, Pastor Interfaith Unity Church, Mesa
Thomas A. Thode Lay Minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yuma
Rev. Dr. Walter F. Wieder, Unitarian Universalist Church, Surprise

LOCAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Arlington Street Church Social Action Committee, Boston, Massachusetts
Asian Law Alliance, San Jose, California
Berkshire Immigrant Center, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Brazilian Immigration Center, Boston, Massachusetts
East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, Oakland, California
The Florence Project, Florence, Arizona
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, Miami, Florida
Grupo Cajola, Morristown, New Jersey
Grupo MUND (Women United for our Rights), Morristown, New Jersey
H. S. Power & Light - Latino Faith Initiative, Denver, Colorado
Jobs With Justice, Boston, Massachusetts
Judson Memorial Church, New York, New York
Justice Council of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky
Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Lexington, Kentucky
Latin America Taskforce Network, River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation,
Bethesda, Maryland
Latinos for Education & Justice Org., Inc., Calhoun, Georgia
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
New York New Sanctuary Coalition
El Pueblo, Biloxi, Mississippi
Saint Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church and Jubilee Center, Auburn, Washington
Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality, Salem, Oregon
Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Durham, North Carolina
Professor Deborah Weissman, Reef C. Ivey II Distinguished Professor of Law,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, co-author of *The Policies and Politics of
Local Immigration Enforcement Laws 287(g) Program in North Carolina*
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center, Morristown, New Jersey