



WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Peter Newsham
Chief of Police
Metropolitan Police Department
300 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

June 21, 2019

Re: Expected increased ICE raids

Dear Chief Newsham:

We understand that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plans to conduct mass arrests, raids, and detentions of immigrants in major cities across the country this weekend. We write to remind you that Washington, DC is a sanctuary city and that MPD should not cooperate with ICE in its enforcement operations.

As recently as March 2017, the Council of the District of Columbia reaffirmed the District's commitment to remaining a sanctuary city and ensuring that the District government not participate in any federal immigration-enforcement strategies.¹ You also noted your commitment to MPD's longstanding policy not to enforce federal immigration law, noting that "...the enforcement of civil immigration laws creates a divide between us and the community we serve and at the end of the day we believe that will make our community less safe."²

The planned ICE operation this weekend will tear families apart and is intended to spread fear in immigrant communities. As you and Mayor Bowser have noted, MPD's participation in these mass arrests would destroy trust between MPD and the communities it is sworn to serve, making the District less safe.

We urge you to take steps to reassure the DC community that MPD will stand by its commitment to protect and serve all DC residents, including by instructing all MPD officers not to cooperate with ICE's immigration enforcement operations.

Very truly yours,

Jonathan Smith
Executive Director
Emily A. Gunston
Deputy Legal Director
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
and Urban Affairs

¹ DC Council Resolution 22-42, March 7, 2017

² DC mayor, Police Dept, Reiterate District Policy of Not Enforcing Civil Immigration Laws, Fox5DC, March 28, 2017, available at <http://www.fox5dc.com/news/dc-mayor-police-dept-reiterate-district-policy-of-not-enforcing-civil-immigration-laws>