

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: October 6, 2009

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY DECIDES TO STRIP ARPAIO'S OFFICE OF ITS FEDERAL IMMIGRATION STATUS

ARPAIO OUTRAGED...

SHERIFF VOWS TO CONTINUE ENFORCING STATE/FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAWS

(Phoenix, AZ) The Washington D.C. based Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has officially advised Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio that it intends to strip deputies of their ICE agent status.

Currently Arpaio has 100 deputies who have successfully enforced immigration laws since 2007, the year the Sheriff signed the controversial 287G immigration contract with the federal government.

Arpaio says the federal government's move against him is strictly political.

Arpaio's Washington D.C. based attorney stated that the decision to curtail the Sheriff's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent status emanates from as high as the White House. Driscoll also says that the White House wants to eventually dissolve the 287G agreement completely with all local law enforcement agencies now assisting the federal government in the fight against the growing problem of illegal immigration into the U.S.

News Release

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The move to curtail Arpaio's authority may stem from several critics' claims of Sheriff's deputies racially profiling people during several law enforcement/crime suppression operations.

A recent audit conducted by DHS, however, examined the Sheriff's 287G program including seven (7) controversial crime suppression operations in Phoenix, Mesa, Fountain Hills, Cave Creek and Guadalupe. Those operations are the focal point of racial profiling allegations.

The 2008 audit, however, cites utterly no wrongdoing on behalf of the Sheriff's deputies and even goes so far as to praise Arpaio and his office for their professionalism and adherence to all the 287G contract guidelines.

The results of the 2008 audit identically mirror other audits conducted over the last few years by several different agencies, all of which found no wrong doing in Arpaio's enforcement of the federal immigration program.

The then FBI Special-Agent-in-Charge from Phoenix was even interviewed in the course of the 2008 audit who reported there were no complaints filed against the Sheriff's federal immigration program (287G) except by Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon.

The DHS audit was done months ago, yet officials at DHS sat on it, refusing multiple requests over a period of nine months to produce it. Those requests came from Arpaio's attorney, Robert Driscoll.

To date, the DHS has still failed to fulfill this request. But this week, the Sheriff's Office obtained the audit report through backdoor channels.

Driscoll, a former civil rights attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice who is based in Washington D.C., says the federal government wants to make an example of Sheriff Arpaio and will stop at nothing to accomplish that objective.

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“DHS knew how embarrassed it would be if this audit became public. The audit results prove the only reason for stripping Arpaio’s office of its ICE agent status is for political purposes, nothing more,” Driscoll says.

Driscoll adds that regarding immigration enforcement, Sheriff Arpaio’s name is the only one circulating on the hill in Washington D.C. and that also, Arpaio’s 287G contract regarding the law enforcement portion is the only one being pulled.

“No coincidence there,” Driscoll says.

Arpaio says DHS’s refusal to publish the results of the 2008 audit prove Washington is being less than honest.

“We’ve caught the feds lying to the public before when they publicly blamed me for something they did – which was to order the immediate release of illegal aliens my deputies arrested in one of our recent crime suppression operations. Fortunately we had the foresight to get the federal authorities on tape issuing the order thereby proving the lies they are apparently so willing to tell,” Arpaio said.

Arpaio is outraged but not surprised by this political witch hunt and vows to continue fighting illegal immigration by enforcing all aspects of the state and federal immigration laws, despite Washington’s ploy to curtail his authority.

Two weeks ago, Arpaio was handed a new contract by DHS that would have allowed the Sheriff to continue his federal law enforcement immigration program as well as his authority to investigate and place holds on all illegal aliens booked into jail.

When Washington learned that Arpaio signed the new agreement, it quickly recanted the 287G contract and immediately dispatched its Washington D.C. based Assistant Deputy Director in Charge of ICE to Phoenix to meet with the Sheriff.

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In that meeting, the Assistant Deputy Director told the Sheriff that DHS would now exclude the law enforcement portion of the federal immigration agreement and would now allow only the jail portion of the agreement to remain.

Deeply disappointed by DHS's decision to curtail the Sheriff's deputies' law enforcement status as ICE agents, Arpaio says the only reason he signed the new 287G agreement last Friday was because he felt it was the right thing to do for the citizens of this county.

This new agreement extends only to Arpaio's jail detention officers the authority to investigate and screen the immigration status of all those booked into the jails.

To date, the Sheriff's Office has investigated and arrested about 33,000 illegal aliens under the program which equates to over 25 percent of arrests made by all 66 agencies who participate in the 287g program nationally.

According to Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas, the Sheriff's enforcement of illegal immigration violations and the County Attorney's successful prosecution of thousands of illegal alien cases have resulted in a drop in both illegal immigration and the overall crime rate in Maricopa County.

That statistic suggests that the reduction may be attributed to the fact that illegal aliens are committing less crime because they are being held in jail without bond and many may not be returning to the U.S. after deportation.

Despite the controversy surrounding the curtailment of the Sheriff's 287g program, Sheriff Arpaio has vowed that he will continue enforcing all aspects of federal and state immigration laws to include human smuggling, employer sanctions, and crime suppression operations. END

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