

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



Date: August 8, 2007

ILLEGAL ALIENS NOW BANNED FROM VISITING SHERIFF'S JAILS

ARPAIO CITES SECURITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE AS REASONS FOR BAN

(Phoenix, AZ) Sheriff Joe Arpaio announced his new policy which prohibits all illegal aliens from visiting inmates incarcerated in his jails. Signs are being posted today on all Maricopa County jails.

Arpaio says the visitation ban is another tool in his arsenal of ways to fight the increasing problem of illegal immigration in Maricopa County.

"I have a number of different ways available to me as Sheriff of this county to find and arrest illegal aliens," Arpaio says.

"My deputies arrest them as they are illegally transported into the county; detention officers interview inmates in jail and can add immigration violation charges to the list of crimes they face; and now, when we determine which visitors to our jails are in the country illegally, we will arrest them in jail lobbies as well."

Arpaio says visitors to his five jails and Tent City must present identification and fill out a visitation request form before being granted an inmate visit. If the visitor is not legally in this country, the visitor can be arrested by one of the Sheriff's 160 federally trained deputies and officers.

The Sheriff says his new Illegal Immigration hotline (602 876 4154) can receive tips from citizens with information about known illegal aliens

News Release

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attempting to visit the jails.

“It doesn’t make any sense to me to allow known criminal violators to visit inmates,” Arpaio says. “We don’t allow convicted felons to visit inmates and we don’t permit anyone who has been incarcerated during the last 12 months to visit people in the jails, so why would I allow known illegal aliens, who are considered law breakers, into my jails?”

An additional benefit to the new visitation ban will be a reduction in wait time for U.S. citizens visiting friends and family in the jail system.

Arpaio says visitors often experience wait times of up to four hours depending on the jail.

“Our jail lobbies now resemble hospital emergency rooms or other social service lobbies. Jail intelligence indicates that numerous visits to the jail systems are generated by illegal aliens. They are competing for services with tax paying U.S. citizens,” Arpaio says. “It isn’t right.”

Arpaio cites the Durango jail visitation lobby as evidence of the waiting problem. Nearly 50% of the people incarcerated at Durango jail are illegal aliens and there waits for visitation are the longest.

Currently, 2000 of the approximate 10,000 inmates housed in Arpaio’s jail system are illegal immigrants. Each inmate is permitted up to three visits per week for a total of 6000 weekly visits to illegal immigrants.

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