

Human Rights Are Not Conditional: Defending Our Immigrant Neighbors

As leaders grounded in the values of justice, dignity and community, we are deeply alarmed by recent reports of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations targeting immigrant communities across Southern and the Central Coast of California.

In cities like Los Angeles, Oxnard and beyond, covert enforcement actions are being carried out by masked agents in unmarked vehicles—using tactics designed to intimidate and surprise people simply trying to care for their families and contribute to their communities.

These operations don't just erode trust; they spread fear across the entire community. They undermine the critical relationships between local law enforcement and the communities they serve, ultimately making all of us less safe. In Los Angeles, there are accounts of plainclothes agents detaining individuals near schools and workplaces. In other parts, community groups have reported increased ICE activity near hospitals,

schools, sporting events and transit centers. These tactics not only harm individuals; they destabilize families, traumatize children and inflict lasting emotional and economic damage.

Immigrant communities are integral to the health, strength and future of our region. They are our neighbors, coworkers, caregivers and friends. Yet too often, their humanity is ignored. They are praised for their labor, but not protected as people—with dreams, fears and rights.

At Community Bridges, we see firsthand how immigration enforcement disrupts lives and deepens fear. Through our family of 10 programs—including La Manzana Community Resources, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County, Lift Line, Elderday Adult Day Health Care, our preschool sites, and the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)—we serve thousands of families each year, many of whom are immigrants.

A recent survey of our clients revealed that more than 90% are concerned about deportation and its impact on their lives. Nine out of 10 reported being afraid, with more than

half rating their fear as 8 or higher on a 10-point scale. Families are urgently seeking information about immigration pathways, their rights and how to keep their children safe. These fears are not abstract—they are daily realities that shape how our community members move through the world.

We must do better. The promise of this country is not reserved for the few. It is rooted in the belief that all people are created equal, and that every individual is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are not earned through labor. They are not conditional upon immigration status. They are inherent.

We cannot accept a reality where people live in fear of simply

existing—where parents hesitate to drop their children off at school, and workers worry that reporting for duty might mean never returning home.

As Community Bridges and Supervisor Felipe Hernandez, we call on all leaders—local, state and federal—to act with urgency, compassion and clarity. Our communities deserve to live with safety, dignity and peace. Nothing less.

This is not just a policy issue, it is a moral one. We must build communities where no one is forced to live in the shadows, and where every person is seen, safe and free.

SUPERVISOR FELIPE HERNANDEZ
AND COMMUNITY BRIDGES

“The promise of this country is not reserved for the few. It is rooted in the belief that all people are created equal, and that every individual is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Ladies, we need your help

Biology 101 and 25 years of experience working with “difficult” teens have taught me that testosterone creates competition and aggression, and estrogen creates cooperation and compassion.

The good old boys in charge have taken us to war again.

This time it could be nuclear,

putting all of the children in the world at risk.

Cooperation and compassion must be our future.

If you haven't already, please raise your voices again.

DON EGGLESTON

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