

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Charlottesville Regarding Recent Immigration Enforcement Actions and Reaffirming the City's Commitment to Civil Rights, Due Process, and Community Trust

WHEREAS, The City Council of Charlottesville is entrusted with safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of the community and with expressing the values and priorities of the City; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville seeks to be a city where everyone thrives; and,

WHEREAS, Charlottesville is a diverse and inclusive community that values fairness, equal protection under the law, and respect for the dignity and humanity of all persons; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville seeks to be a welcoming community, including being welcoming to immigrants from other countries; and,

WHEREAS, recent immigration enforcement actions undertaken by federal authorities, including actions that have resulted in serious injury or loss of life, have generated widespread public outrage regarding civil rights, accountability, and the appropriate use of force; and,

WHEREAS, such actions, regardless of the ultimate outcome of any investigation, can profoundly affect public trust, community cohesion, and the willingness of residents to engage with local government and public safety services; and,

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and that the City has no authority or responsibility to regulate, direct, or control the operations of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) or other federal agencies; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council nevertheless retains the authority and responsibility to speak on matters that affect the safety, rights, and trust of the Charlottesville community, and to advocate for constitutional protections and humane treatment for all persons.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville:

1. Expression of Condemnation and Grief

Charlottesville mourns the loss of life caused by recent immigration enforcement actions. The City unequivocally condemns any enforcement tactics that needlessly endanger human life, disregard basic dignity, and erode the rule of law.

2. Affirmation of Community Values and Practices

The City affirms its commitment to constitutional protections, equal treatment under the law, and the humane and respectful treatment of all individuals within the community.

Charlottesville rejects the normalization of fear, secrecy, and violence as tools of governance. Public safety must never be achieved through terror, humiliation, or the

abandonment of due process. Peaceful protest is an American right and not a valid target for federal action.

3. Public Safety and Community Trust

The City finds that, in the context of federal immigration enforcement, practices such as concealing an official's identity, operating in plain clothes, using unmarked vehicles, failing to clearly and promptly identify authority, or engaging in confrontational tactics without clear legal justification create an unreasonable risk of violent escalation. Moreover, tactics that deny persons access to basic human needs and rights guaranteed by the Constitution, such as operations aimed at schools, medical facilities, courthouses, and houses of worship run counter to the American spirit and should not be tolerated.

Such practices do not merely undermine community trust; they place residents, bystanders, and officers themselves in immediate danger, and are incompatible with principles of transparent, accountable policing.

Charlottesville Police officers do not hide their identities. Charlottesville Police officers activate their body-worn cameras when working in the community. Charlottesville Police officers have been trained to de-escalate confrontations. Charlottesville Police officers receive extensive training on how to protect the Constitutional rights of all persons. The City is proud of its Police Department's commitment to building trust with all residents, including through its longstanding practice of not collecting or maintaining information about a person's immigration status, recognizing that community trust is essential to public safety.

4. Federal Immigration Authority

The City recognizes that federal immigration enforcement authority is derived from federal statute and limited by the United States Constitution, and that unless the City and ICE enter into an agreement under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, the City has no responsibility or authority to enforce immigration laws.

Federal law does not generally authorize immigration officers to stop vehicles, enter private property, or take enforcement actions absent lawful authority supported by probable cause and, where required, a judicially issued warrant. Moreover, the City finds that immigration enforcement actions aimed at schools, medical facilities, courthouses, and houses of worship, while potentially legal, are unduly disruptive to the community's well-being, and wrongfully interfere with human dignity and rights granted by law.

The City rejects enforcement actions that exceed or evade these legal limits and finds that such actions erode public confidence, destabilize communities, and undermine the legitimacy of lawful authority itself.

5. Call for Transparency and Accountability

The City urges federal authorities to conduct thorough, independent, and transparent investigations into incidents involving the use of force in immigration enforcement and to make findings available to the public to the extent permitted by law.

The City further calls on federal agencies to immediately reevaluate and discontinue tactics that conceal identity, obscure authority, or rely on fear and force rather than clear legal process.

6. Impact on Federal Personnel

The City recognizes that certain tactics now commonly employed in federal immigration enforcement, even when authorized or condoned by federal officials, can place federal officers themselves at risk of physical harm, legal jeopardy, and moral injury.

The City further finds that enforcement practices that obscure identity, that rely on fear created by ambiguity, or that prioritize displays of force over clearly bounded legal authority can dehumanize both community members and the officials charged with carrying out those actions, while entangling federal personnel in operations that serve political objectives rather than public safety.

7. Limitation on Scope and Authority

This resolution is intended solely as an expression of the values and concerns of the City as expressed by its current City Council. Nothing in this resolution is intended to direct the City Manager or City staff to interfere with lawful federal activities or to alter any existing legal obligations or authorities.

8. Communication to Federal and State Officials

The City Council, as a body, will communicate with Charlottesville's representatives in the United States Senate and House of Representatives, as well as Virginia's Governor and Attorney General, to convey the City's concerns regarding federal immigration enforcement and to request they exercise their respective authorities to promote transparency, accountability, and adherence to constitutional and statutory protections through any means possible, including appropriate legislative action.