



Major Cities Chiefs Association
Sun Valley, Idaho
June 7, 2006

The President of the Major Cities Chiefs Association and Houston, Texas Police Chief Harold Hurtt announced today the adoption of nine recommendations for the United States Congress and the President to assist in resolving the immigration crisis facing America today. The Major Cities Chiefs Association, comprised of the largest police agencies in America, are the first responders to over fifty million residents. We are very concerned that the public policy under consideration does not take into full account the realities of local law enforcement in dealing with this issue on the ground. The foundation of the nine point position statement is five key concerns with local police enforcing federal immigration law. These concerns are:

1. It undermines the trust and cooperation with immigrant communities which are essential elements of community oriented policing.
2. Local agencies do not possess adequate resources to enforce these laws in addition to the added responsibility of homeland security.
3. Immigration laws are very complex and the training required to understand them would significantly detract from the core mission of the local police to create safe communities.
4. Local police do not possess clear authority to enforce the civil aspects of these laws. If given the authority the federal government does not have the capacity to handle the volume of immigration violations that currently exist.
5. The lack of clear authority increases the risk of civil liability for local police and government.

Given these concerns the Major Cities Chiefs are recommending that Congress and the President adopt the following nine points:

1. Securing the borders must be a top priority.
2. Enforcement of the laws prohibiting the hiring of illegal immigrants.

3. Consulting and involving local police agencies when developing any immigration initiative is imperative if the initiative is to involve local agencies.
4. Federal law must not mandate local enforcement of federal law - all law enforcement initiatives must be completely voluntary
5. There should be no reduction or shifting of current federal funding for state and local programs to pay for new immigration enforcement activities
6. Any initiative involving local police agencies should be incentive based
7. The authority and limitation of liability for local law enforcement officers and police agencies must be clear.
8. Civil immigration detainees must be removed from the NCIC system
9. MCC members are united in their commitment to continue arresting anyone who violates the criminal laws of their jurisdictions regardless of the immigration status of the perpetrator.

Most local police agencies have adopted policies of not inquiring about immigration status of individuals that are reporting crimes or in other encounters unless the person is suspected of committing a crime. Those policies have developed over the past 25 years because of law enforcement's commitment to provide protection to everyone within their jurisdiction and more recently because of state and federal laws prohibiting racial profiling. In addition, the federal government does not have the capacity to deal with the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in the US today. As Congress and the President wrestle with these difficult issues it is important that national policy reflect a clear understanding of the enormous challenges that local police face in dealing with illegal immigration.

End

Copies of the MCC nine point position statement are available can be obtained at the Houston Police Department Media Relations Office – 713-308-3200.