

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

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Barbed wire and flag

CLEVELAND The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio sent a letter today to the Painesville Police Department urging it to discontinue its new policy that directs police to engage in unlawful racial profiling against people of color, immigrant families, and individuals whose primary language is not English. The policy wrongly guides local police officers to enforce federal immigration law.

This policy makes the entire Painesville community especially its many immigrant families less safe, said Elizabeth Bonham, staff attorney at the ACLU of Ohio. Local police should be seen as a resource for the entire community, but by enforcing federal immigration laws, victims of crimes who are undocumented, or those victims who have family or friends without citizenship status, will be less likely to seek police help.

Painesville Police Chief Anthony Powalie implemented this policy earlier this month. In 2007 Painesville City Council passed an ordinance declaring that Painesville was not a sanctuary city, and that the Lake County Jail leaves the decision up to local communities. But under federal law, immigration enforcement is reserved to the federal government, not for local police.

Immigration enforcement is a federal issue, not a local or state one, and federal law does not require police to notify ICE about community members suspected citizenship status, noted Bonham. Instead of adopting policies that are biased against certain members of the community, police should adopt guidelines that support everyone in Painesville.

The ACLU of Ohio urges the Painesville to fully reject this policy, and will continue to monitor the development of appropriate policing in Painesville.

The letter to the Painesville Police Department is available.

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[Read the letter to the Painesville Police Department](#)

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