

IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL LEADS TO THREAT, ARREST

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Body

Massachusetts police have arrested a local man and accused him of sending a threatening e-mail to Florida state Rep. Will Snyder over the Republican's proposal to bring an Arizona-style immigration law to the Sunshine State.

"You better just stop that ridiculous law if you value your and your family's lives, a-----," the e-mail said.

Police identified the suspect as Manuel E. Pintado, 47, Snyder told the Times/Herald.

"It's a pretty thoughtless letter, don't you think?" said Snyder in his trademark low-key style.

Snyder said he received the e-mail just one hour after the Tucson shooting rampage targeting Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Snyder referred the matter to the Martin County Sheriff's Office on Jan. 9, and the office soon contacted authorities in Northampton, Mass.

Massachusetts police said Pintado acknowledged sending the e-mail from a Starbucks. A self-described "political activist," Pintado said he was concerned that Snyder wanted to undo the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees citizenship to those born in the United States.

Pintado said he didn't mean to kill Snyder, but "was glad the e-mail made (Snyder) nervous," according to an arrest affidavit. Pintado was charged with attempted corruption by threat of a public official and written threat to kill or injure, which are second- and third-degree felonies, respectively.

Snyder said the incident shows that heated rhetoric is an unfortunate part of public service.

"There are extremists on both ends of the political spectrum," Snyder said.

Snyder, a former Miami police officer who lives in Stuart, said the e-mail concerned him because people shouldn't make violent threats against anyone. He also pointed out that he proposed an immigration crackdown bill because "we're a nation of laws."

"I'm not out there saying immigrants are stealing jobs or ruining our schools," he said. "I just believe the laws should be enforced."

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Snyder is working closely with the Florida Hispanic caucus on the bill and has expressed a willingness to tone down the most controversial aspect of the Arizona-style law: a requirement that police ask suspects for proof of citizenship during routine traffic stops or arrests.

Graphic

PHOTO: A man from Massachusetts sent an e-mail threatening state Rep. Will Snyder of Stuart.

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