

COBB COUNTY: Deputies get lessons in deportation; Feds run classes: ICE teaches law enforcement how to deal with illegal immigrants once they are caught.

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Body

Six sheriff's **deputies** from **Cobb County** are in Herndon, Va., until June 8, training to participate in a program that will let them put certain detained **immigrants** in **deportation** proceedings.

Five departments, including the **Cobb County** sheriff's office, are participating in the training, said Richard Rocha, a spokesman for U.S. Immigration and Customs **Enforcement**.

They will learn about immigration **law**, racial profiling and document fraud, among other issues.

Immigration and Customs **Enforcement** has agreements with 21 agencies to participate in the program. It allows for faster identification of **illegal immigrants** charged with a crime. It also allows for the initiation of **deportation** proceedings.

Sheriff Neil Warren addressed **Cobb**'s participation in the program in a statement his office released a few months ago.

While immigration **enforcement** is a **federal** responsibility, the sheriff said then, "when **illegal immigrants** come into our community and commit crimes, it becomes a local **enforcement** issue and we will not hesitate to use all of the tools at our disposal to ensure the safety of our citizens and the **enforcement** of our **laws**."

Even without this program, jails still would have to report all suspected **illegal immigrants** charged with felonies or DUIs to **federal** authorities as part of a state **law** that takes effect in July.

Cobb's participation in the program has sparked controversy.

Several Latino advocacy organizations and members of a **Cobb** Hispanic Initiative, which was created in 2004 to better engage Latinos, voiced their displeasure last year after the **county** commissioners unanimously endorsed the sheriff's application to join the **federal** program.

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And some **law enforcement** agencies balk at doing the work of **federal** immigration agents.

"We don't want our hands tied by the **federal** government," said Cherokee **County** Sheriff Roger Garrison, who doesn't want the program there. "There are no guarantees. You may end up holding someone for six to eight months, which would literally break the backs of the taxpayers."

Additionally, he said, the jail is full. "There is no room at the inn," he said.

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