

## **Pulling Back the Immigration Posses**

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### **Body**

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Many parts of the nation have tilted severely toward harsh, unyielding policies to catch and punish illegal immigrants, but not everyone has gone over the edge. Gov. Janet Napolitano of Arizona on Monday pushed **back**, vetoing a bill that would have required all police and sheriff's departments in the state to join the federal **immigration posse**.

Governor Napolitano dismissed the bill as impractical and expensive. She said it would have imposed an undue burden on local law enforcement, calculating that the cost of training that many officers under the federal program known as 287(g) could total \$100 million -- with no guarantee that the federal government would pay.

She also could have called it dangerous. The bill would have turned practically every level of law enforcement in Arizona into some form of the feared *la migra*. Police chiefs across the country warn that would cripple their ability to investigate crime in immigrant communities. The 287(g) program is also far too prone to abuse.

That is already flagrantly clear in Arizona's most populous county, Maricopa, where Sheriff Joe Arpaio has built the biggest 287(g) **posse** in the country -- 160 officers -- and deployed it in Hispanic neighborhoods, **pulling** people over for broken taillights and other traffic infractions and checking papers.

Defenders of the Maricopa raids deny accusations of racial profiling, but it is hard to see it as anything else. The highly publicized sweeps have reaped bumper crops of fear and anger among Latino Arizonans -- citizens and illegal immigrants -- who have endured the stops, the flashing lights, the requests for papers. They have been little use in the serious pursuit of criminals.

Governor Napolitano's veto of this repugnant bill will surely lead the Minutemen and their allies to denounce her again. She is standing up for what is right for her state and for what is right. The search for a rational **immigration** system will not be resolved by simplistic, predatory enforcement schemes.

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