

San Jose: ICE supervisors, not agents will meet with community activists

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Body

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT (7/21/2011, pg. 2A)

An article about a **meeting** between immigration officials and **San Jose community activists** incorrectly identified the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

Rejecting a demand by **San Jose community activists**, federal immigration officials said they **will not** allow a pair of their anti-gang **agents** to **meet** them face to face.

Instead, the coalition of **activists** are scheduled to **meet** next week with two **supervisors** for the U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement **agents**, who were invited by **San Jose** police Chief Chris Moore to help them investigate the city's increasingly violent gangs.

Community advocates are now expected to **meet** privately with Clark Settles, special **agent** in charge for **ICE** Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and Shane Folden, deputy special **agent** in charge for **ICE** HSI, who are both based in **San** Francisco.

"As the two top managers for **ICE** HSI in Northern California, Mr. Settles and Mr. Folden are responsible for any decisions about HSI's participation in such enforcement partnerships," Virginia Kice, an **ICE** spokeswoman, said in an email Tuesday. "Likewise, Mr. Settles and Mr. Folden are ultimately accountable for the results of those efforts, which is why they **will** represent HSI at the upcoming **meeting**."

But the **activists** aren't satisfied. They demanded the **meeting** with **agents** to get their assurances that they **will** be focusing on gang members, **not** law-abiding undocumented residents.

"This is **not** what we asked for. **Meeting** with the **supervisor** is a good step, but we want to **meet** with the **agents**," said Maria Noel Fernandez, an **activist** with Sacred Heart **Community** Services. "One of the things we want to know is who they are, who **will** be walking around our neighborhoods, how do they see their roles?"

And so the tense showdown over a duo of federal investigators continues.

Independent Police Auditor LaDoris Cordell said if identifying the **ICE agents** could jeopardize their anti-gang work, then the **community** leaders should **meet** with the **supervisors**. She said she suspects **ICE** has never met with members of the immigrant **community** in **San Jose**.

"**Community** leaders must take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to have their concerns aired and all of their questions answered; and the **ICE supervisor** must be forthright and candid in answering them," Cordell said.

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Earlier this month, this newspaper reported that Moore invited the agents to help work with his gang investigations unit, hoping to stem the recent spike in gang violence that has led the city to one of its highest homicide rates in years. But advocates for the city's immigrant community reacted with dismay, saying that it was undermining the chief's attempts to rebuild trust with them.

They contend the agents' presence on the streets would only exacerbate chronic fears in the immigrant community that reporting crimes or cooperating with police officers will lead to deportations. Moore and his department have repeatedly tried to reassure the community that they are not in the immigration enforcement business. The agents, he promised, would be closely monitored to make sure they focused solely on violent gang members.

But many in the immigrant community remain suspicious.

Said Zelica Rodriguez, a director of the immigrant advocacy group SIREN, "The chief told us that he was the one who would be supervising the agents. Why meet with the supervisor, if Moore is the one who is supervising their activities?"

"It's a real fear when the federal government works alongside local law enforcement," Rodriguez said. "What is the real reason why?"

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