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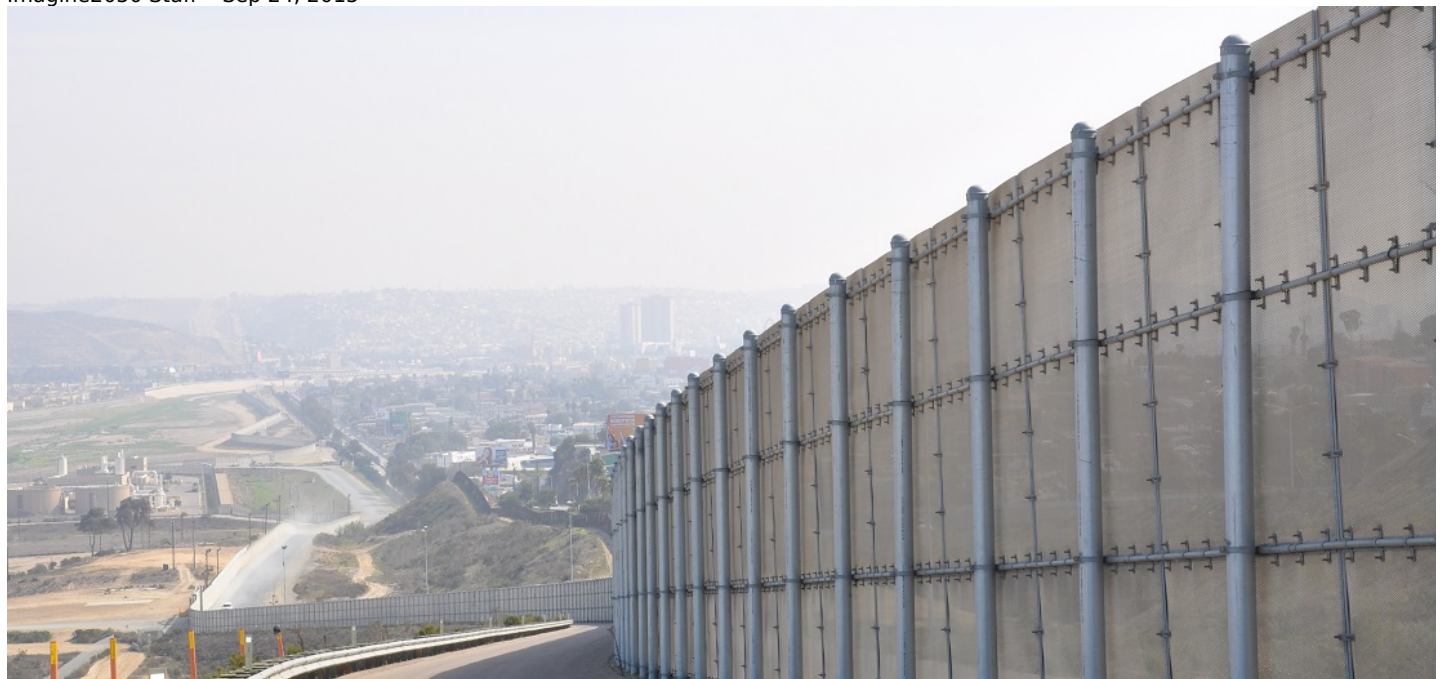
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FAIR border summit to introduce sheriffs nationwide to border vigilante group

Imagine2050 Staff • Sep 24, 2015



Source: flickr

For the last several years, building partnerships with county sheriffs across the country has increasingly become a part of the [organized anti-immigrant movement's](#) efforts to advance its destructive immigration enforcement policy goals.

During a time when scrutiny of police-community relations continues to be a pervasive and vital discussion for both advocates and lawmakers, we should all consider the role extremist groups can or should play in influencing police behavior.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform ([FAIR](#)), which has been designated a [hate group](#) because of its roots in white nationalism and eugenics and its virulent and false attacks on immigrants, is playing a lead role in these relationship-building efforts. FAIR is hosting a "Sheriff Border Summit" scheduled for October 30-31 in McAllen, Texas, advertising an "education and training event created specifically for Sheriffs."

The October 2015 Summit is not the first of these events. In September 2014, Sheriffs from 11 states participated in a two-day "border summit" near El Paso, Texas. During the summit, FAIR staff and others including Jessica Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies ([CIS](#)), allegedly provided the sheriffs with "information and training on how to identify and address threats posed by criminal gangs and international terrorists who exploit weaknesses in our nation's immigration enforcement system," at least she did according to FAIR's October 2014 newsletter.

FAIR announcement of 2015 Sheriff Border Summit

According to a flyer announcing next month's summit, participating sheriffs will see presentations on topics including drug cartels, so-called sanctuary city policies, and an ominous session entitled "Recognizing the Border Crisis in your jurisdiction."

FAIR's announcement also notes that the summit will include a "meeting with Texas Border Volunteers and Texas Bar B Q at the Vicker Ranch." "Vicker" is likely a misspelling of "Vickers," as in Dr. Mike Vickers and Mrs. Linda Vickers, the leaders of the border vigilante group Texas Border Volunteers (TBV). [The Texas Observer](#) has noted that the Vickers own a ranch in central Brooks County, approximately 70 miles north of McAllen, where TBV's activities are based.

The Vickers formed TBV as an offshoot of the border vigilante Minutemen movement in 2006. As the Minutemen movement had come to be correctly perceived as extremist, TBV was founded with the intention of moderating that perception. As *The Observer* reported last year, however, TBV has had difficulty shedding its extremist image entirely.

For example, in April 2013, two TBV members chased down and detained a group of immigrants for two hours with their own shoelaces in what came to be known as "the shoestring incident."

Such extreme behavior is not limited to TBV lower-ranking members. It goes all the way to the top. *The Observer* also notes that TBV leader Linda Vickers has, in now-deleted posts on social media, boasted of sending her dogs to chase immigrants into trees. "Sorry, but it was so funny to see this IA [illegal alien] on one side of the fence running parallel with my dogs on the other side," Vickers wrote.

Vickers even composed a song evoking her encounters. The lyrics: "Do not cross my ranch / Cause you and I will meet / With my devil dogs / Then it's goodbye you fucking guys / and you go back to the borderrrrr"

As one former member plainly stated, "Texas Border Volunteers operates as a militia in plain sight and no one is calling them on it. They've done a good job at suppressing what they do."

"They are essentially unlawfully detaining people. That is part of the reason I left," another former TBV member said.

FAIR, it seems, does not have any objections to such behavior. Both Mike and Linda Vickers were welcome guests at their annual media and citizen lobbying event, [Hold Their Feet to the Fire](#), earlier this year.

Familiar attendees, disingenuous histories

One sheriff who will be dining at the Vickers' ranch next month will be [Terry Johnson](#), of Alamance County, North Carolina. Johnson recently requested \$2,570 from county commissioners to cover travel and rental car costs to attend next month's summit. Commissioners approved Sheriff Johnson's request Monday evening, according to [The Times-News](#).

In its coverage of Johnson's request for travel funds, *The Times-News* has noted that the FAIR event is "not required training or certification." So why are Johnson and members of his staff using taxpayer money to attend? Johnson's request should elicit even more scrutiny when considering he and staffers [previously attended](#) a September 2012 iteration of FAIR's border summit using Department of Justice funds. While promoting that event, FAIR disingenuously suggested that its training had been approved by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program (HIDTA).

"In no way is the 'border school' sanctioned, co-hosted, or endorsed by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program," Rafael Lemaitre, of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, [told Hatewatch](#) at the time.

FAIR is no longer advertising events like its Border Summit as such to sheriffs. This should only further establish that the quality of the "training" offered by FAIR at these events should not be trusted. Rather, one can expect each of FAIR's training sessions to be infused with nativist fear mongering and tenets from the doctrine of "self-deportation" designed to malign immigrant communities – authorized and unauthorized, alike.

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