



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

October 9, 2020

Mr. Tony H. Pham
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the
Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20024-6121

Mr. Thomas Decker
Field Office Director
New York Field Office
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Suite 9-110
9th Floor
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278

Dear Mr. Pham and Mr. Decker:

We are deeply concerned about reports of actions taken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers in New York City that have the power to adversely impact the relationship between immigrant victims and witnesses of crime and the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

Specifically, the Mayor's Office has received numerous reports of ICE enforcement activity, conducted earlier this year, that indicate a pattern of ICE agents making representations that erroneously suggest they are local police, in order to gain access to homes or otherwise make an arrest. The reports received specify that during these representations, ICE officers often identify themselves as "police" or "detectives" and state that they are conducting an investigation.

Furthermore, we have heard of instances where ICE officers allegedly stated that they were in fact local police officers from specific police precincts or squads. In one case, ICE officers reportedly stated that they were members of a "narcotics squad" and claimed to be investigating unspecified crimes or suspects. In a separate complaint, ICE officers stated that they were police from a particular local precinct, where on at least one occasion they arranged to meet an individual for arrest. In yet another report received by the Mayor's Office, ICE agents purportedly went to a home where they stated that they were "police" and told the man they sought to arrest that he had to come "to the precinct" where they would "figure this out."

These types of activities jeopardize the willingness and comfort of immigrant New Yorkers in interacting with the NYPD on crucial matters involving public safety and local law enforcement. The NYPD already conducts regular community outreach to immigrant community

members to educate the public about our confidentiality policies for all victims and witnesses, regardless of immigration status. ICE actions that exacerbate confusion about NYPD's work and relationship to immigration enforcement are counterproductive to these efforts. Indeed, in recent months, the City has had to repeatedly affirm our local policies and provide additional support to communities in order to assure residents that it is still safe to report crime and to help differentiate NYPD and ICE.

New York City remains the safest big city in America in large part because of NYPD's work to ensure that victims and witnesses of crime feel safe coming forward. Our officers' ability to build trust with all communities, ensure confidentiality, and singularly focus on fighting crime is the bedrock of our policies to ensure that crime remains at a record low.

Clearly stated, the NYPD does not want ICE agents stating or implying that they represent the NYPD. Such behavior negatively affects the public safety mission of the NYPD and erodes trust in our communities. Accordingly, we ask that you immediately issue guidance to your agents prohibiting them from stating or implying that they represent the NYPD.

New York City has an incredibly rich and diverse immigrant community. Practices that drive our residents into the shadows and create fear of serving as a witness, reporting crimes, or coming forward as victims will only endanger the public safety of all our residents.

Thank you. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

cc: Chad Wolf, Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security