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## STATEMENT FROM MAYOR WILMOT J. COLLINS

I appreciate the residents that are in attendance tonight. I assume you are here to share your concerns regarding the detainment of Mr. Martinez last week by federal law enforcement.

I understand the immense frustration and fear that many of our residents feel about what transpired. The facts about what happened and the role of the Helena Police Department doesn't change the circumstances for Mr. Martinez and his family. But I do believe it is important to reiterate what occurred with our Police Officers.

Helena Police Department was coordinating with U.S. Marshals to locate a suspect wanted for felony domestic assault with a weapon. HPD was not coordinating a planned immigration raid. Federal agents notified HPD that they had potentially located the suspect, which led to a traffic stop by HPD. Because of the coordinated effort, federal agents were present at the traffic stop. When the driver was determined not to be the suspect, HPD began issuing a traffic ticket that was ultimately not issued. It was during this time that federal agents notified our officers that they would be detaining the driver.

HPD did not arrest or transport Mr. Martinez. Neither our officers, or the City's elected officials, have authority or jurisdiction to obstruct the work of the federal government.

What I know about last week's incident, it highlights the incredibly complex and challenging situation that our Police Officers face every day.

I deeply respect the compassion our residents show their fellow community members. It is part of what I appreciate most about Helena. But I ask that you remember that our Police Officers are also members of our community and are doing their best every day to serve us professionally, and within their authority.

Our officers are not lawmakers. They are public servants committed to maintaining the safety and well-being of our entire community. That often means they are called to coordinate with state and federal law enforcement agencies, and they must respect the boundaries of their authority.

We are in a challenging time, and I understand the frustration that many of our residents feel. But I urge

you to not lose compassion for our neighbors, which includes the members of our Police Department. I am proud of the integrity and professionalism that our officers display in carrying out their duties, especially in times of intense scrutiny.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wilmot Collins", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wilmot Collins  
*Mayor, City of Helena*