



METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Metro Council Office

August 29, 2019

Mr. Warner Hassell, Court Administrator
General Sessions Court Administration Office
Justice A.A. Birch Building
408 2nd Ave. N., Suite 1140
Nashville, TN 37219

cc: Robert Green, Probation Department; Jon Cooper, Metro Legal Department; General Sessions Judges; Mayor David Briley

Mr. Hassell,

A recent WSMV report has brought to light actions of the Metro General Sessions Probation Department, which, according to the story, has actively coordinated with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to attempt to deport Nashvillians reporting for probation. According to the report, in at least one instance, one of the probation officers wrote to an ICE agent that he "was told to call" someone on probation and "get him in the office" with the intent to arrest and deport the individual.

The Probation Department, as stated on its website, "has the responsibility of ensuring that probationers comply with the conditions of court-ordered probation." The actions of the department regarding ICE coordination directly contradict its responsibility, as they deter probationers from compliance. As you are aware, General Sessions probationers have committed misdemeanor offenses, and they often come to the department with court-ordered steps toward rehabilitation, which may include substance abuse treatment, counseling and community service. The aforementioned actions of probation officers create a significant deterrent to these rehabilitation efforts, thereby jeopardizing the well-being of our residents and the safety of our communities.

The Probation Department's website also states that the probation department's efforts "are spent making the community a safer place to live." Again, deterring probationers from reporting to their assigned officers does the opposite of the department's stated mission. Probationers become less likely to receive the court-ordered monitoring and assistance they need, thereby making all of our communities less safe. Additionally, such tactics increase mistrust among immigrant Nashvillians, who then become less likely to report crimes and more likely to become victims of crime themselves.

We, the undersigned, call upon you and the General Sessions Judges to ensure that the General Sessions Probation Department immediately ceases assisting ICE with the identification and apprehension of Nashvillians for civil immigration matters. We also call upon you to investigate the actions of the Metro General Sessions Probation Department, which, according to media reports, has actively coordinated with ICE.



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Should an additional investigation be needed to ensure a proper and fair review, we would request that you contact the Metro Legal Department to ensure that the investigation be conducted by an appropriate outside body. We would also request that, when completed, the results of said review and/or investigation, along with all current written policies regarding General Sessions coordination with ICE, be presented to the Metro Council at a public meeting no later than October 31, 2019.

Sincerely,

Colby Sledge, District 17 Councilmember
Jim Shulman, Vice Mayor
Bob Mendes, Councilmember-At-Large
Erica Gilmore, Councilmember-At-Large
Sharon Hurt, Councilmember-At-Large
John Cooper, Councilmember-At-Large
DeCosta Hastings, District 2 Councilmember
Brett Withers, District 6 Councilmember
Anthony Davis, District 7 Councilmember
Nancy VanReece, District 8 Councilmember
Bill Pridemore, District 9 Councilmember
Jeff Syracuse, District 15 Councilmember
Burkley Allen, District 18 Councilmember
Freddie O'Connell, District 19 Councilmember
Mary Carolyn Roberts, District 20 Councilmember
Ed Kindall, District 21 Councilmember
Mina Johnson, District 23 Councilmember
Kathleen Murphy, District 24 Councilmember
Jeremy Elrod, District 26 Councilmember
Delishia Porterfield, District 29 Councilmember
Fabian Bedne, District 31 Councilmember
Antoinette Lee, District 33 Councilmember
Angie Henderson, District 34 Councilmember
Sean Parker, District 5 Councilmember-elect
Tonya Hancock, District 9 Councilmember-elect
Tom Cash, District 18 Councilmember-elect
Gloria Hausser, District 22 Councilmember-elect
John Rutherford, District 31 Councilmember-elect
Joy Styles, District 32 Councilmember-elect