

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

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From: Larry Behrendt <larrybehrendt@gmail.com>
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I'm Larry Behrendt, representing Indivisible Santa Barbara. I live in District 2.

Mark Twain said, there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics. He had a point. Statistics can be used for truth, or to distract from the truth.

At the TRUTH Act Forum, the Sheriff's Office reported a 0.003% percent cooperation with ICE. That's wrong by a factor of 100. Do the math yourself, using the Sheriff's own numbers. (If you're going to report a decimal as a percentage, you have to move the decimal point two places to the left.) The Sheriff repeated this same error for 2023, which makes me wonder how carefully he puts these reports together. I pointed this error out to representatives of the Sheriff after the Forum and asked that they correct their record.

Another error: the Sheriff reports 39 ICE requests that were SB 54 qualified. But there are only 38 such requests in the Sheriff's 2024 Truth Act Report. Count them yourself. His report shows one ICE arrest that was not SB 54 qualified—this was for prisoner 83. On its face, this re-arrest may have violated state law, though the Sheriff's office may have an innocent explanation. I hope that the SBBS asks about this.

But the bigger problem with the Sheriff's statistics is how they include people released from jail who were not subject to ICE jurisdiction. Using this as a point of comparison renders their statistics meaningless. Instead, compare apples to apples. In every case where the law allows it, our Sheriff voluntarily complies with ICE transfer and notification requests. That's 100% cooperation in 2024, as it was 100% in 2023 and 2022, and it will be 100% in 2025 and 2026 unless we DO something about it.

How often is the Sheriff required to cooperate with ICE transfer and notification requests? Absent a judicial warrant, the answer is 0%. How often does the Sheriff in SLO comply with these requests? 0%. At least 10 other California counties don't

hold TRUTH Act forums, because they have adopted policies prohibiting voluntarily cooperation with ICE.

One last statistic: since 2022, ICE re-arrests out of Santa Barbara County are up 800%. That's a percentage our Sheriff chose not to highlight, but it's one of great importance to our community.

I leave you with questions statistics can't address. How much does our Sheriff's cooperation with ICE erode public trust, harm public safety, and interfere with our County's stated goal of building a culture of compassion for all? How many families does it leave broken, pushed into poverty and living in fear?