

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

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Elias Nepa, Orcutt, 4th District

In light of the Board's consideration of proposals involving the use of unincorporated areas for immigration enforcement detention facilities, I respectfully request that the Board initiate two actions:

1. Adopt a non-cooperation ordinance that clearly identifies and prohibits the unauthorized use of county personnel, resources, funding, facilities, or information for immigration enforcement activities beyond those authorized by law; and
2. Authorize an independent inquiry to examine any formal or informal agreements, operational practices, or patterns of cooperation that may exceed the County's lawful authority, with particular attention to whether sufficient oversight currently exists to detect or prevent abuses of authority.

The purpose of such an inquiry would be to determine whether county personnel have knowingly or unknowingly facilitated practices that extend beyond ordinary local law enforcement responsibilities. Specifically, the inquiry should examine whether any information-sharing, transfers of custody, or access to individuals have contributed to immigration enforcement activities that may be connected to broader operational objectives outside the County's jurisdiction.

Among the questions warranting investigation is whether county personnel have been aware of, or have facilitated, practices that expose local families to unnecessarily militarized enforcement measures. The inquiry should also determine whether detentions occurring in courthouse lobbies, hallways, or other public spaces are part of a broader pattern that extends beyond ordinary civil immigration enforcement.

In particular, if evidence demonstrates that access to individuals or the transfer of information has been knowingly provided after identifying connections to unauthorized anti-drug operations involving U.S. personnel in sovereign foreign territories, the Board should determine whether those actions were intended to facilitate expanded immigration enforcement while obscuring conduct that implicates violations of foreign sovereignty. If such evidence exists, the implications would extend beyond county administration and raise significant legal, constitutional, and international concerns.

Likewise, the inquiry should determine whether any individuals have been subjected to immigration enforcement not because of individualized legal grounds, but because of nationality, family relationships, community associations, or other indirect ties to persons affected by anti-drug operations conducted abroad. If enforcement decisions have been influenced by such factors, rather than by lawful individualized determinations, the Board should evaluate whether county personnel knowingly or unknowingly participated in practices that exceeded their lawful authority.

Whether the relevant conduct occurs in courthouse lobbies and hallways outside the Sheriff's immediate custodial jurisdiction, or within areas of the jail under the Sheriff's control, the underlying question remains the same: what legal authority governs the release of information or access to individuals that ultimately results in federal immigration detention? The Board should determine whether those practices remain within the County's lawful authority or whether local actions have functionally expanded federal immigration operations without sufficient public oversight.

If the investigation identifies evidence supporting a causal relationship between immigration detentions in these public areas and unauthorized anti-drug operations involving U.S. personnel in Mexico or elsewhere in Latin America, the Board should determine whether county practices have inadvertently or intentionally contributed to an enforcement framework that extends beyond the County's lawful jurisdiction. Such findings would warrant immediate policy review and appropriate corrective action.

The Board previously discussed detentions occurring in courthouse lobbies and hallways. I respectfully request that the Board clarify the legal principles governing information-sharing and cooperation that precede those detentions, identify the policies authorizing such practices, and determine whether additional safeguards are necessary to ensure that county authority is exercised independently, transparently, and within constitutional and statutory limits.

Kind regards,

Elias Nepa