

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Piedmont Area Democratic Committees Condemn ICE & CBP's Deadly Misconduct

We, the Democratic Committees of the Piedmont Area, representing Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Rappahannock, Orange, and Spotsylvania counties, denounce the actions of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agencies. The murders of both Renee Good and Alex Pretti are but two of the most recent examples of excessive and abhorrent actions. These deaths show a complete lack of accountability by DHS Secretary, Kristi Noem, ignorance of de-escalation training, and a complete disregard for the agency's mandate to focus on those who truly represent a danger to our country.

DHS's own data indicates that fewer than 30% of those arrested have any criminal convictions, and only a small fraction involves violent offenses¹. Agents target lawful residents and citizens over whom they lack jurisdiction and willfully ignore individuals' 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 14th Amendment rights. We have witnessed agents engage in dehumanizing and dangerous tactics; reports have documented elderly individuals left outdoors in freezing temperatures, children used as bait to detain their parents, and repeated violations of right to counsel.

Americans across communities have mobilized in protest, calling for accountability, transparency, and a pause to ICE operations until the agency is fully evaluated for lawful conduct. While we firmly condemn any act of violence against officers, portraying peaceful demonstrations as "riots" is a deliberate effort to distort lawful protest and legitimize the agency's escalating use of force.

We urge residents to contact their state and local representatives and advocate for an immediate end to cooperation with ICE. Constituents should also reach out to their sheriff's offices to affirm that local law enforcement has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure ICE complies with constitutional, federal, and state law. We further call on Governor Spanberger to: continue rejecting mandatory participation in the 287(g) program; oppose any effort to establish new detention centers in Virginia; and, if necessary, deploy the Virginia National Guard to safeguard the lives and livelihood of Virginians.

Current federal actions do not reflect a commitment to public safety. Instead, this administration's approach has been to create fear and disorder. Despite our nation's complicated history, the United States has long aspired to welcome newcomers with dignity and hope—a principle we must continue to defend.

¹ Cato Institute, "5% of ICE Detainees Have Violent Convictions; 73% Have No Convictions," <https://www.cato.org/blog/5-ice-detainees-have-violent-convictions-73-no-convictions>.