

**PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF OUR COUNTY
SUPPORT REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**SAY NO TO ACTIONS THAT RESTRICT ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND TO THE
ENFORCEMENT OF IMMIGRATION LAW**

There is a great deal of frustration about our nation's broken immigration system, but the Mecklenburg's Board of Commissioner's plan as set for action on December 6th, will not solve the problem. All in this community feel the loss and pain when there are accidents that end in the death of a member of our community. We should all do whatever is necessary to keep these incidents from occurring whenever possible.

However, the policy change in on the Commissioner's agenda for December 6, 2005, will neither reduce the immigrant population, nor discourage those who come to the U.S. and to our county to work. There is an active immigration reform debate going on at the federal level, where our nation's immigration laws are made. As we engage in that debate, we should not pass legislation which does nothing to fix those problems, and instead creates new ones.

This proposed policy change by the county will undermine public health in our state.

- The language of this proposed change in county policy is vague and could lead to misinterpretations of the law.
- For example, immigrants could be denied essential preventive services, like vaccinations, that are designed to keep us ALL safe. During potentially dangerous outbreaks, it is in the interest of the general public to make sure that prevention and treatment are available to everyone. By excluding immigrants from this type of care, this proposal seriously endangers the public health.
- This proposal could force public health employees, like doctors, nurses, and emergency personnel, to become immigration enforcers, requiring them to spend valuable time and resources checking documents rather than providing services. Most Americans don't carry documents showing that they belong in their own country, and are likely to face delays when seeking medical care. Similarly, legal immigrants have a variety of statuses under dozens of different visa categories. It is unwise and unfair to expect essential medical personnel to implement this complex area of law.

This proposed policy change by the county will undermine the public safety.

- This change in policy would require already overburdened law enforcement personnel to check the immigration documents of people they come into contact with. Many local police departments and police chiefs object to these kinds of policies because they discourage immigrant communities from having contact with police, fire departments, and other civic authorities. When immigrants fear reporting crimes, acting as witnesses, or reporting domestic violence, the safety of the larger community is jeopardized.
- The California Police Chief's Association, the El Paso (TX) Police Officers Association, and the Chiefs of Police in Seattle, Nashville, Boston, and many other cities have publicly

objected to these kinds of policies because they undermine law enforcement's ability to do its job.

This policy shift is a wasteful and inefficient use of resources. This would turn a whole variety of state and local employees into immigration agents. The proposal would require those delivering any publicly funded service to check the immigration status of those they come into contact with. This broad language would mean that everyone from health providers, law enforcement officers, and emergency personnel, to librarians, teachers, and community programs receiving state or local funds could be forced to spend valuable time and resources checking the immigration documents of those they come into contact with. This is a wasteful, inefficient, and potentially harmful requirement which will, in the end, accomplish nothing towards immigration control.