

March 16, 2017

Commissioners Cirino and Hammercheck:

Subject: Mexican Matricula Consular Card

Both of you stated on the campaign trail that you do not support a sanctuary city policy. If something has changed your thinking on that policy, please let us know.

Why the need for the matricula consular card? That question led us to do some research.

A May 15, 2006 article in the Vindy.com website provided some answers. It appears that pressure was applied by the nursery owners to the elected officials in office at that time. They needed to hire cheap labor to work in their fields. Rather than use the legal means offered by the federal immigration system, Painesville officials agreed with the Mexican government to accept their matricula card.

This identification card, given to individuals unvetted by appropriate American authorities, allowed them to open bank accounts, finance cars and even buy houses. In effect, they became "de facto" citizens.

According to Veronica Dahlberg, the founder of the advocacy group Hispanic Organizations of Lake and Ashtabula, there were between 8,000 and 10,000 Mexican immigrants, and about half are probably here illegally. It appears Ms. Dahlberg does not mind violating Title 8, Section 1324 of our federal immigration law.

A quote attributed to the then Painesville City Manager Rita McMahon is quite disturbing. "We realize there's probably a certain percentage of the population here that's undocumented. As long as it's not creating a problem, we really do not have the resources to be able to worry about it". We are always bothered when elected officials violate their oath of office, and willfully violate the law.

A FOIA request provided some additional insight. It showed that on October 13, 2005 Commissioner Troy presented the matricula card resolution to then Commissioners Aufudish and Sines and moved for its adoption. The resolution that was unanimously adopted stated the following reasons for acceptance:

1. It is the official record issued by the Mexican government to any Mexican individual living abroad, and is proof of their Mexican citizenship.
2. The purpose of the consular registration is to enable consular officers to provide protection and access to consular services, as well as to help relatives and authorities locate Mexican nationals abroad. Consular registration is recognized by international law and consular posts of every country around the world to exercise the service enabling consular and diplomatic officers to furnish inherent rights and privileges of citizenship.
3. Throughout the country, the consular ID has gained recognition by government and law enforcement officials for the visitors and residents working in the communities.

On October 17, 2005, Lake County Chief Deputy William E. Crosier wrote a letter to the commissioners documenting the Congressional Testimony of Steve McCraw, Assistant Director of the Office of Intelligence, FBI before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims, on Consular ID Cards, given on June 26, 2003.

Director McGraw stated:

1. The Department of Justice and the F.B.I. have concluded that the Matricula Consular card is **not** a reliable form of identification, due to the non-existence of any means of verifying the true identity of the card holder.

2. In addition to being vulnerable to fraud, the Matricula Consular is also vulnerable to forgery.
3. There are two major criminal threats and a potential terrorist threat posed by the cards. The card can be a perfect breeder document for establishing a false identity. There is also the criminal threat of alien smuggling and money laundering.

The Sheriff's Department was so concerned about the resolution that was passed that it suggested that you may want to further research the matter. Our law enforcement's legitimate concerns for the safety of Lake County residents went unheeded.

Commissioner Troy stated to us recently in a public meeting that the card did not provide any benefits to those that had the card. We completely disagree with Commissioner Troy on this issue. The card has conveyed many rights afforded to U.S. citizens to unvetted citizens of another country.

We are also dismayed by the unintended consequences that resulted from Commissioner Troy's 2005 decision. There was a horrific death as a result of an unvetted illegal alien allowed into our county. In addition, the continued influx of illegal aliens into our community has placed additional demands on our education system, family services and law enforcement. This has resulted in the need for new schools, language interpreters, and a myriad of other expenses that are paid for by the citizens of Lake County. We are very concerned that the continuing increase in the size of our local government, and the subsequent rise in property taxes are going to price many seniors living on a fixed income out of their homes.

In summary, in 2005 our elected officials made a decision that helped business owners find cheap labor. That decision has had and continues to have severe consequences: (1) it puts Lake County citizens' lives at risk, (2) it increased the demands for social services at the expense of taxpayers, and (3) it violates our federal laws by bringing in unvetted illegal aliens.

We favor legal immigration. A policy of open borders will ultimately destroy the sovereignty of our country. Please do what is right for Lake County residents and rescind the 2005 resolution accepting the Mexican matricula card as a form of identification. If Commissioner Troy is correct, and it is a meaningless document, then it should have no impact on the community that relies on it.

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