

Bartleson, Debra K. - CC City Council Central Office

Subject: FW: Passing the Denver Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Proposal is important for victims of domestic violence

From: Leanna Stoufer [<mailto:lstoufer099@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, July 24, 2017 8:18 PM

To: Lopez, Paul D. - CC City Council Elected <Paul.Lopez@denvergov.org>

Subject: Passing the Denver Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Proposal is important for victims of domestic violence

Dear Councilman Lopez:

As a long-time citizen of Denver, and a legal advocate, working with survivors of domestic violence, as well as sexual assault and stalking, I appreciate you, and Councilwoman Kniech, introducing the Denver Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Proposal.

This proposal addresses many concerns that I am hearing from the people I work with, who may be dealing with immigration concerns for themselves, their families, and their abusers too.

Looking particularly at domestic violence, often, the initial concern is that people don't know what will happen if law enforcement is involved in a domestic violence case that includes immigration concerns. Denver has done a reasonably good job of announcing their intentions to protect residents' safety, regardless of documentation status. However, an announcement of intention is not the same as knowing there is an ordinance in place that specifically states how Denver Police Dept., Denver Sheriff's Dept., and Denver Human Services comply with federal laws, what this looks like in practice, and how Denver limits their participation with ICE and related immigration authorities.

Another frequent concern (also frequently used as a threat by abusers) is that the victim of domestic violence may be deported for reporting a crime. Often, there is a variation of this that plays on the fears that reporting domestic violence may put other family members (often important members of the victim's support system) at risk for deportation. These fears are difficult to address when the processes and policies are not spelled out.

Domestic violence victims are also often concerned about the abuser being deported. This may seem counterintuitive, but when looking at the complexity of domestic situations it is a valid concern. In some situations, the abuser may be the primary breadwinner for the family. If that person is deported, who will provide rent, food, and other basic needs? In other situations, child support or child care arrangements may be derailed if the abuser is deported. This can quickly cost a solo parent (usually the mother) their job. If reporting abuse means losing all support, because ICE could be immediately notified, and the person deported, even

without a warrant signed by a judge, victims are less likely to report the crime. They are also less likely to access other resources if these might open the door to an unknown series of events leading to deportation. If the policies are unclear, a victim is likely to base their decisions on the worst-case scenario.

Finally, there are situations where the victim may not be against having the abuser deported, but there are concerns that deportation may happen before the criminal legal process has been resolved. This can result in cases that don't move forward, and a lack of actual criminal consequences for the abuse. The victim is put at continued risk, and never knows when the abuser will simply return to continue the abuse. Certainly, these situations are complex, and may often fall outside the scope of the Denver Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Proposal, but knowing that cases will be handled consistently in Denver is a good start to this aspect as well.

Again, I ask for your support in passing the Denver Public Safety Enforcement Priorities Proposal.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions. I can be reached at 303-548-0958.

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"A series of miracles can happen when many people become concerned, and are willing to act, at the right time." ~ Martha Sharp, Refugee Activist Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War