

NANCY MACE
1ST DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
1728 LONGWORTH HOUSE
OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3176
WWW.MACE.HOUSE.GOV

MOUNT PLEASANT OFFICE
652 COLEMAN BLVD.
SUITE 102
MOUNT PLEASANT, SC 29464
(843) 352-7572

BEAUFORT OFFICE
710 BOUNDARY ST.
BEAUFORT, SC 29902
(843) 521-2530

September 25, 2024

Mr. Patrick J. Lechleitner
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Lechleitner,

We write regarding the sanctuary policies implemented by Kristin Graziano, the Sheriff of Charleston County, which have emboldened criminal illegal aliens and endangered the residents of Charleston County and our surrounding communities.

We understand that under Sheriff Graziano's leadership, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office has refused to provide U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with adequate hold time to assume custody of illegal aliens and refused to provide ICE with notification they have an illegal alien in custody prior to their release. In fact, Charleston County has been recognized as a non-cooperative institution by ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations Criminal Apprehension Division.¹

This is not an isolated incident. According to ICE data, since Fiscal Year 2021, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office has refused to honor at least 51 detainer requests issued by ICE – opting instead to release these criminal aliens into our communities.

On August 23rd of this year, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office refused to honor an ICE detainer request for an illegal alien who had been arrested and charged with two counts of criminal solicitation of a minor – and instead released this criminal illegal alien on bond. This criminal illegal alien attempted to have sex with a child, and instead of cooperating with ICE, Sheriff Graziano released this illegal alien, and alleged pedophile, back into our community.

This is disturbing.

¹ <https://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/KML/Sanctuary/Detainer-Acceptance-June-2024.pdf>

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As you are aware, Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes ICE to enter into agreements with law enforcement agencies to delegate the authority to perform certain immigration officer duties to state and local law enforcement officers under ICE's direction and oversight and to identify and remove criminal aliens from our communities.² Prior Sheriff Graziano's tenure, Charleston County had a 287(g) agreement in place with ICE and worked hand-in-hand with ICE to enforce our nation's laws and protect our communities from criminal aliens. On Sheriff Graziano's first day in office, she terminated Charleston County's 287(g) cooperation agreement with ICE.³

We understand that since this agreement with ICE was terminated, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office:

- No longer arrests illegal aliens they encounter
- No longer detains illegal aliens prior to immigration proceedings
- No longer turns over criminal illegal aliens to ICE for removal proceedings

Given the invasion at our southern border, we are outraged by Sheriff Graziano's disregard for our nation's laws and failure to cooperate with ICE to keep our communities safe.

In light of this, we request you provide our office with the following information by October 15, 2024:

- All email communications between any employee of ICE and any employee of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office on or after January 4, 2021
- All documents relating to detainer requests issued by ICE to the Charleston County Sheriff's Office on or after January 4, 2021, including the criminal charges brought against each alien and whether the alien was released from custody by the Charleston County Sheriff's Office

To arrange for the delivery of documents or to ask any follow-up questions, please contact our office at (202) 225-3176.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress

² 8 U.S.C. 1357(g)

³ https://www.postandcourier.com/news/charleston-county-sheriff-kristin-graziano-cancels-ices-deal-with-jail/article_cdf4e9ec-4f89-11eb-bbe4-33f9452ec0ee.html

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September 24, 2024

Kristin R. Graziano
Sheriff
County of Charleston, South Carolina
3691 Leeds Avenue
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Sheriff Graziano,

We write regarding the sanctuary policies you have implemented in Charleston County in your capacity as Sheriff. Your policies embolden criminal illegal aliens and endanger the residents of Charleston County and our surrounding communities.

From the moment you were sworn in as Sheriff, you have systematically dismantled immigration enforcement in Charleston County. You have also made every possible effort to turn Charleston County into a sanctuary jurisdiction. Under your leadership, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office has refused to provide U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with adequate hold time to assume custody of illegal aliens and refused to provide ICE with notification you have an illegal alien in custody prior to their release. In fact, Charleston County has been recognized as a non-cooperative institution by ICE.¹

In other words, you are purposefully and systematically allowing criminal illegal aliens to roam free in Charleston County and surrounding areas. You are purposefully putting local residents at risk, adults and children alike.

This is not an isolated incident. According to ICE data, since Fiscal Year 2021, your office has refused to honor at least 51 detainer requests issued by ICE – opting instead to release these criminal aliens into our communities.

On August 23rd of this year, your office refused to honor an ICE detainer request for an illegal alien who had been arrested and charged with two counts of criminal solicitation of a minor – and instead released this criminal illegal alien on bond. This criminal illegal alien attempted to

¹ <https://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/KML/Sanctuary/Detainer-Acceptance-June-2024.pdf>

A small, handwritten mark or signature in the bottom left corner of the page.

have sex with a child, and instead of cooperating with ICE you released this illegal alien, and alleged pedophile, back into our community.

This is disturbing. This is sick.

As you are aware, Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes ICE to enter into agreements with law enforcement agencies to delegate the authority to perform certain immigration officer duties to state and local law enforcement officers under ICE's direction and oversight and to identify and remove criminal aliens from our communities.²

Prior to your tenure as Sheriff, Charleston County had a 287(g) agreement in place with ICE and worked hand-in-hand with ICE to enforce our nation's laws and protect our communities from criminal aliens. On your first day in office, you terminated Charleston County's 287(g) cooperation agreement with ICE.³

Since you terminated this agreement with ICE, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office:

- No longer arrests illegal aliens they encounter
- No longer detains illegal aliens prior to immigration proceedings
- No longer turns over criminal illegal aliens to ICE for removal proceedings

Given the invasion at our southern border, we are outraged by your disregard for our nation's laws and your failure to cooperate with ICE to keep our communities safe. In light of this, we request you provide our office with the following information by October 15, 2024:

- All email and text communications between any employee of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office and any employee of ICE
- All documents relating to detainer requests issued by ICE to the Charleston County Sheriff's Office
- All documents relating to illegal aliens apprehended by the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, including the criminal charges brought against each alien and whether the alien was released from custody
- All internal email and text communications between employees of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office pertaining to the termination of the 287(g) agreement between Charleston County and ICE
- All internal email and text communications between employees of Charleston County Sheriff's Office pertaining to ICE, detainer requests, and expedited removal orders

Further, we demand you immediately cease these sanctuary policies. Using the office of Sheriff of Charleston County to advance a far-Left agenda which puts illegal aliens over the safety of

² 8 U.S.C. 1357(g)

³ https://www.postandcourier.com/news/charleston-county-sheriff-kristin-graziano-cancels-ices-deal-with-jail/article_cdf4e9ec-4f89-11eb-bbe4-33f9452ec0ee.html

our communities and our state is out of step with our Lowcountry values and puts South Carolina citizens at risk.

To arrange for the delivery of documents or to ask any follow-up questions, please contact our office at (202) 225-3176.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Mace". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Mace
Member of Congress

NANCY MACE
1ST DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

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“Sanctuary Sheriff Kristin Graziano cannot justify her morally reprehensible sanctuary policies endangering the lives of South Carolinians. Instead of taking accountability for her actions, she has decided to engage in a personal attack against me and deflect from the simple truth: Sanctuary Sheriff Graziano has chosen to release criminal illegal aliens – including an alleged pedophile – into our community.

In her statement, Sanctuary Sheriff Graziano acknowledged she refuses to honor ICE detainer requests unless other conditions are met and cites Charleston County Sheriff’s Office department policy as her justification for doing so. **The kicker, she wrote the department policy.** It doesn’t have to be this way. No matter how many facts she twists, Sanctuary Sheriff Graziano has released dangerous criminal illegal aliens into our communities, a fact she has not disputed.”

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Mace".

Congresswoman Nancy Mace