

Dr. William Truly, Jr.
MAYOR

The City of Canton
One people, one voice, one goal

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November 7, 2019

William Truly Jr., M.D.

Mayor

City of Canton, Mississippi

“Immigration Raids: Impacts and Aftermath on Mississippi Communities”

On August 7, 2019 without warning, notice, or acknowledgment, ICE had invaded the City of Canton and raided PECO Poultry for the purpose of identifying and documenting undocumented immigrants who worked at PECO foods. There were seven poultry industries in the State of Mississippi that were raided by ICE for the purpose of accomplishing an intended mission. As the Mayor of the City of Canton I was never noticed, or informed about the pre-plans and imminent raid of one of our businesses here in the City of Canton. My discovery was accidental as a consequence of a citizen informing me that ICE was on Fulton Street at PECO poultry carrying workers away by handcuffs and who were transported to the National Guard Armory in Flowood, MS. I approached one of the ICE officers and introduced myself as Mayor of the City and requested to speak with whomever was in charge for the purpose of trying to understand and assess what was occurring in my city. It was at that time I was able to visualize only Hispanic workers being placed on buses for the purpose of being transported to a site which was unknown to me at that time. To my knowledge, no African American workers were arrested or transported. My Chief of Police Otha Brown, the Superintendent of Education Gary Hannah and the Director of the Department of Human Services were never informed. It is my understanding that at the time that the raid took place that some of the individuals were documented with the appropriate papers. This was the first day of school and the children of these individuals who were arrested and transported to an unknown site to be processed were still in school and returned home not knowing that their parents had been arrested. The Hispanic

population in the City of Canton are not gang members, rapist, or murderers, but folks who work, pay taxes, purchase goods, take care of each other and their families. It is my understanding that at PECO foods there were at least 125 to 130 Hispanic employees who were arrested that resulted in an acute loss of 125 to 130 PECO workers. I do not know the economic lost to PECO'S nor do I know the economic lost or impact of this raid to the City of Canton. Throughout the State of Mississippi there where seven poultry industries that where raided, 680 people arrested, and 300 of those were released. This was a terrifying moment for those individuals who were arrested that included the separation of parents from children. It is my understanding that nothing was in place for the children of the arrestees to be safe, protected, and secured. No social services, including DHS, were placed on notice to target children who were going to be separated from their parents. I am of the opinion that when ICE raids or invades a community and or a target in that community at least the Mayor and the governing authorities, Chief of Police, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Director of Department of Human Services should be placed on notice. It was a terrifying experience for the arrestees and a puzzling experience for me as the Mayor and for this community.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Truly Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Truly Jr., M.D.

Mayor, City of Canton, MS