

**Subject:** Kristin Hopkins, Charleroi Borough Council president correspondence concerning tomorrow's TPS hearing  
**Importance:** High

Members of the House Judicial Subcommittee on Immigration,

My name is Kristin Hopkins and I am the President of the Charleroi Borough council in Charleroi, PA. I am writing you regarding my concerns about an fellow councilmember, Larry Celaschi, and his invitation to be included in discussion in front of this subcommittee. I am both surprised and frustrated that I had to hear about this in my community and was never contacted on the matter. If I had been, I would have been able to aid your committee myself or by getting you in contact with those in the community who better know the truth of the situation on the ground here.

It was brought to my attention last evening that Mr. Celaschi was invited to be a part of a panel in front of the subcommittee hearing scheduled for tomorrow, Dec 17, 2025 at 2:00 PM. I understand the hearing is concerning TPS status and the effects immigration has had on the Borough of Charleroi and the country at large. Members of the community, business owners, and leaders in our community have deep concerns that Mr. Celaschi has not appropriately or truthfully represented the current state of the immigration situation in Charleroi. I have attached some of the many occasions when Mr. Celaschi spoke to the media and misrepresented the facts. Much of the community does not align with his opinions. That is what his talking points are, only opinions. They do not align with the truth of the matter or the statistics regarding TPS, "illegal" status, crime, traffic accidents, finance, the economy, etc. The fact that he was invited to speak for and seemingly represent the people of Charleroi is very troubling to the community. Business owners and citizens alike have reached out to me with concern. One being Mark Alterici, for example, who's seen his cell phone Cricket business boom in the last few years due to the immigrant population. Life became better for many since they came here, but Mr. Celaschi supports an opposite narrative which is being promoted by a very few in the community.

The reason I can speak on this is because I've been in the thick of it for the last few years. My credentials are as follows: Besides being Council president, I serve on our regional police board, the borough finance committee, the Neighborhood Partnership Project Board(which funds our immigrant

liaison), have been in communication with constituents over the last two years regarding their concerns, as well as in communication with the immigrant community throughout their residence here. We've held Common Ground USA events and helped with food and clothing drives, as well as bringing infant and pre-natal services. I've worked with code enforcement to enforce housing regulations and have been in constant contact with our Governor and Senators Bob Casey and John Fetterman since taking my post in January 2024 concerning this situation. I've also directly worked with the non-profits, such as JFCS, Hello Neighbor, The PA literacy council, and all our churches, who have been integral in navigating through it all. I have also worked in partnership with the Charleroi Area School District, where students of all races and creeds are thriving and recently accepted the Blue Ribbon Award of PA, recognizing our district for their excellence in education. I've been involved in workforce development through a partnership with Careerlink of PA and have been in constant communication with the owner of the local Food Packaging plant, who employed many of those on TPS status here before selling the business last week. I have been "boots on the ground" during the last two years, monitoring this situation and reporting our status to the Governor's office and our local legislators and Senator Fetterman's office, as of late.

Conversely, Mr. Celaschi has no reference to address this situation. His only role has been this: He has contacted independent and local media and misrepresented the truth of the situation and has, in turn, exacerbated the racism, division, and hate. Mr. Celaschi has no knowledge of any of this good work, nor has he been involved in helping the community, only with tearing down all the hard work we have all done to come together and spreading incorrect information regarding the immigrant population here. He has no authority to speak for most of the council, and, in my opinion, he is overstepping his authority to speak for all constituents, especially after his poor showing in the last election.

The true state of Charleroi is one of population growth, new businesses, renovation of blighted properties, and growth of our tax base. Much of this positive movement is due to the immigrant community. Do we have challenges? Sure, we are a town of 4000 with an influx of around 2000 new residents in the last 8 years or so. Our new neighbors were mostly non-English speaking at first and we proudly have 44 nationalities residing here in peace in our .8 square mile borough. Although mostly non-English speaking, we have found that by the spring semester most students in our district could be moved to an English-speaking classroom. The new population wants to learn and acclimate. We have waiting lists for ESL classes consistently and currently. They filled so many vacant properties, including storefronts and residences previously on the blight lists. Our economy has not been affected negatively at all, with many nonprofits and our churches helping when needed. Were there some bad characters who looked to take advantage of our new neighbors? Yes, but criminal charges have been brought down upon those individuals. Do we have traffic accidents? Sure, just as many as we always have, with a majority, by in large, being American born individuals. Do we have crime? Not so much anymore. Our opiate and fentanyl epidemic has been largely obliterated, due to the rentals now being occupied by law abiding immigrants, not addicts or dealers. I have family members who have struggled with addiction and have firsthand knowledge of what it was like on our streets 10 years ago. Currently, I would walk anywhere downtown at night with no worries. Charleroi, in my opinion, is an example of how to successfully navigate a situation like this, through community and service.

I could go on for hours, due to my passion for my hometown, but I believe it boils down to this in Charleroi: Is it one's preference to see people who look different, but fill empty storefronts and residences, adding to the tax base and workforce or does one prefer everyone and everything looking the

same, like 10 years ago, with empty homes and businesses and rampant crime? Personally, I am hopeful that we will never go back.

I am always available to discuss the true nature of the situation here and am so thankful to be able to clarify some of the truths of the matter here through this letter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kristin Hopkins

Charleroi Borough Council President

media sources:

<https://archive.vn/GwajO>

[https://x.com/America\\_2100/status/1833941557327560704](https://x.com/America_2100/status/1833941557327560704)

<https://www.monvalleyindependent.com/2025/10/04/are-charlerois-streets-too-dangerous/>

<https://www.wesa.fm/identity-community/2024-09-20/charleroi-was-adapting-to-an-influx-of-migrants-then-donald-trump-weighed-in>