

United States Senate

November 21, 2018

Nathan R. Catura
National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association
1100 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036

Dear President Catura:

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns. I appreciate your perspective and your many years of service in pursuit of public safety and the rule of law. As you note in your letter, it has been a privilege to have spent the bulk of my career in law enforcement. First as San Francisco District Attorney, then later as California's Attorney General, I worked to promote public safety and improve the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. I advocated for innovative approaches to reduce recidivism, and I fought hard to ensure that law enforcement officers had the resources they needed to do their jobs effectively and safely. And as a United States Senator, I have continued those efforts, such as pushing for increased funding of the Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Program, which has enabled state and local law enforcement agencies to hire approximately 129,000 additional officers. And throughout my years as a public servant, one of my highest priorities has been working with law enforcement to combat the illegal trafficking of drugs, guns and human beings.

I also appreciate your invitation to work together constructively to address the unique challenges our law enforcement community faces. We share frustration with the nation's existing broken immigration system, and as you may know, among other prescriptions, I supported the Border and Port Security Act, requiring Customs and Border Protection to increase the number of field operations officers. I welcome the opportunity to collaborate on these and other important issues. And while we may not always agree on specific policy proposals, I know we both share a deep commitment to supporting those women and men who have dedicated themselves to the difficult work of protecting and serving the public.

As the basis for any successful collaboration is trust based on facts, I would like to make something clear: I did not—and would not—compare ICE, or any of its officers, to the Ku Klux Klan. As is now well known, in 2015, Ronald Vitiello, currently the nominee to head ICE, posted on social media that the Democratic Party should be renamed the “NeoKlanist Party.” Why Mr. Vitiello chose to compare one of America's two mainstream political parties to a domestic terrorist organization best known for cross burnings and lynchings I do not know. But as you reference in your letter, perceptions of law enforcement matter which is why I felt it necessary to ascertain Mr. Vitiello's views on that topic. Mr. Vitiello is seeking an important

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position of public trust; he owes the American people a clear explanation as to whether such inflammatory and divisive language reflects his beliefs.

Our law enforcement officials must always rise above such partisan divides. And as you note, we must work together to strengthen the perception of law enforcement and its relationship with the communities it serves. You and I both appreciate that those privileged to protect and serve must earn the trust of a public who depends on law enforcement's impartiality, fairness, measured temperament and unwavering commitment to the rule of law to keep them safe. This is particularly true of anyone seeking to enforce of our nation's immigration laws.

I know you share my conviction that ICE, as well as all our law enforcement agencies, must be led by just and ethical leaders who exemplify the highest standards of fairness, and I am very much looking forward to working with you to ensure we identify such leaders and promote public policies that will support them and help them succeed.

Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator