



\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE – CORRECTED VERSION\*\*\*

For Immediate Release: May 27, 2015

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## **TUSKEGEE BECOMES FIRST CITY IN ALABAMA TO ENACT IMMIGRANT TRUST POLICY, REJECT ENTANGLEMENT WITH IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT**

*Policy Advances Pres. Obama's Policing Task Force's Call to "Decouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing"*

TUSKEGEE, Alabama – This Wednesday, May 27th at 10:00am Tuskegee government officials, civic leaders, and immigrant and civil rights advocates from across Alabama will gather at Tuskegee's Coty Administration Building to announce a set of historic policies promoting inclusion, fair treatment for immigrants, and non-biased community policing.

On Tuesday, May 26th, the Tuskegee City Council passed a resolution barring discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, and immigration status by all city officials, and declaring that immigration status should have no bearing on Tuskegee police officers' decisions to question, stop, arrest or detain individuals.

Today, Chief Lester C. Patrick will announce his Department's plan to issue a general order that, like other immigrant "TRUST" policies enacted across the country, will prohibit the warrantless detention of individuals by the Tuskegee Police Department at the request of immigration authorities, and placing sensible limits on the collaboration between his department and federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"No resident or visitor of Tuskegee should fear that a routine interaction with our officers could lead to the drastic consequence of deportation," said **Chief Patrick**. "Our job is to promote order and safety for all people in Tuskegee, no matter where you come from, and we're all more safe when residents don't fear the police."

"Tuskegee occupies a special place in history as a key location in the movement for the civil rights of African-Americans. We are committed to carrying that legacy forward by promoting fair and just treatment for all persons in our city, including our immigrant brothers and sisters," stated **Mayor Johnny Ford**.



Tuskegee’s announcement comes only days after President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing released its [final report](#), calling on the Obama Administration to “[d]ecouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing.” The Task Force, which was convened in the wake of the events in Ferguson and across the nation, recommended that “[l]aw enforcement agencies should build relationships based on trust with immigrant communities” because “[t]his is central to overall public safety.”

Mayor Ford stressed the importance of enacting an immigrant TRUST policy in the midst of the national debate on police reform: “At a time when cities are deeply rethinking and reforming the relationship between community members and the police, it is important that we take into account our more recently-arrived residents of all ethnic and racial backgrounds.”

“Misguided federal programs like Secure Communities, and its replacement Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), that co-opt local law enforcement agencies and local taxpayer dollars to identify, detain, and transfer individuals—many of whom have little or no criminal history—to ICE custody have destroyed immigrant communities’ trust in law enforcement and incentivized racial profiling,” stated **Carlos Ramos**, a Central Alabama resident and immigrant rights advocate. “People in my community are scared of any contact with the police, even if they are victims or witnesses of a crime. We need to work with our local officials to change that.”

“These deportation dragnet programs, especially when they involve detention by local authorities, have also come under increasing constitutional scrutiny in the courts, leading over 250 localities from California to Georgia to enact TRUST policies like Tuskegee’s,” stated **Jessica Vosburgh**, Director of the Adelante Alabama Worker Center and Staff Attorney for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, which has advocated across the country for the disentanglement of local police from immigration enforcement.

“Four years ago, Alabama legislators enacted the infamous anti-immigrant law HB 56, which brought shame to our state, hurt our economy, cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees, and fueled the separation of Alabama families,” stated **Frank Barragan**, an organizer with the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice. “Today, the City of Tuskegee takes a historic step in the opposite direction—the direction of progress, unity, human rights and respect for the dignity of all persons. We call on other cities and counties in Alabama to follow Tuskegee’s lead.”

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