

Chronicles

Phoenix Becomes Illegal Alien Sanctuary After Leftist Group Meets With Police Chief

Arizona's largest city recently became a sanctuary for illegal aliens after its police chief held a private meeting with a leftist group that demanded a change in immigration enforcement policies, records obtained by Judicial Watch show. The closed-door session between Phoenix Police Chief Jeri Williams and Will Goana, policy director for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Arizona, occurred just weeks before the Phoenix Police Department quietly implemented a new policy banning officers from contacting the feds after arresting an illegal alien and forbidding them from asking about suspects' immigration status. The new order violates key provisions of a state law upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court and leaves the city vulnerable to costly lawsuits.

Judicial Watch exposed the abrupt policy revision in July after obtaining a copy of the Phoenix Police Department's new sanctuary Immigration Procedures and filed a public-records request to uncover the steps that led to the change. Law enforcement sources told Judicial Watch in July that the revisions were crafted by a Hispanic advisory committee that promotes open borders with the backing of the influential ACLU. It appears to be part of a broader scheme to dodge federal immigration laws in Arizona's most populous county. Earlier this year, Judicial Watch reported that the newly elected sheriff in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, was releasing hundreds of criminal illegal immigrants — including violent offenders — from county



Phoenix Police Chief Jeri L. Williams

jail facilities to protect them from deportation.

The new records obtained by Judicial Watch show that an ACLU offshoot known as People Power attempted to meet with Williams, who became chief on October 28, 2016, on April 19, 2017 to order the policy change. It's not clear if that meeting took place but it appears that it did not, and People Power called in the big guns at the ACLU. That's when Goana, who also lobbies the Arizona legislature on civil liberties issues, met privately with the chief, on May 9, according to the records.

People Power reps followed up with a meeting request on May 16 to discuss the Phoenix Police Department's immigration policy changes with Chief Williams, the records show. The meeting occurred on June

9, about a week after Phoenix City Manager Ed Zuercher met with People Power and gave the group a glowing review. In his assessment, the city manager describes the leftist group as "one of the most reasonable groups I've talked with" and says it consisted of "a former high school teacher, a magazine editor, 2 attys, a massage therapist, and two Hispanic advocates who I've never seen before." On June 29, Chief Williams had a follow-up meeting with the ACLU and People Power regarding the changes to the immigration policy, the records show.

People Power was launched by the ACLU as a direct response to the "Trump administration's attacks on civil liberties and civil rights." It recruits local activists to pressure law enforcement and elected officials to

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Leftist

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commit to the following demands:

- Not ask people about immigration status;
- Decline to engage in the enforcement of immigration law;
- Refuse to detain immigrants on behalf of the federal government unless there is a warrant signed by a judge.

Thanks, in large part, to the group's efforts, the 3,000 officers in the Phoenix Police Department have been stripped of discretion from addressing the crime of illegal immigration or using sound judgement when it involves suspects thought to be in the U.S. illegally. No other federal crime in department policy has those restrictions. Officers continue to have the discretion to contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Postal Inspectors, U.S. Marshalls and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) without fear of violating department policy.

Allowing officers to use their discretion when dealing with criminal aliens has been an effective tool in curbing crime. In 2008, former Phoenix Police Chief Jack Harris revealed that a 24 percent decrease

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in homicides and a 26 percent decrease in auto thefts could be partly attributed to “a new immigration policy that allows our officers to use their discretion when dealing with criminal aliens” and “unprecedented cooperation between our investigative units and our state, federal, and local partners (Maricopa County Attorney's Office).”

Border patrol contacts in the Tucson Sector reported that in the same fiscal year (2008 – October to September) they saw a 41 percent decrease in border apprehensions. Nevertheless, on July 24, the new restrictive immigration policy went into effect at the Phoenix Police Department at the request of an open borders coalition. Now officers can't even use the term “illegal alien,” which has been officially replaced with “unlawfully present.” **JW**



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