



In recent weeks, it has become clear that our Mayor is doing all he can to garner national attention, as evidenced by remarks made during a radio interview and his recent trip to Wisconsin. Yes, you read that correctly. The Los Angeles Mayor was invited to speak at the Ideas Conference hosted by the Center for American Progress in Madison, Wis. The event was promoted as the first gathering of potential Democratic candidates for 2020, and Eric was selected to give the opening keynote.

It appears the Democratic Party is recognizing that it cannot take traditionally “blue” states for granted, considering our current president unexpectedly carried Wisconsin. What gets my attention is that the Mayor of Los Angeles is sent to be the one to rally the voters of Wisconsin. He spoke of being “pissed off about the political moment...” and followed with this:

“Everybody’s right to be pissed off. What rational person or feeling person wouldn’t be pissed off right now? But if that’s your end goal, and that’s the final state, you can’t actually accomplish things just being pissed off,” Garcetti said. “It can be a motivator to hit the street, to speak up, to demand that your representatives stand up for your values. But there’s a lot of people in America who aren’t obsessed with the soap opera here, and aren’t actually following the back and forth between left and right on Facebook feeds.”

This on the heels of his remarks in a recent radio interview where he expressed concern that increased Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids under the Trump administration could cause already high tensions in his city to boil over.

“If something goes wrong, I fear a tinderbox out there, you know, where people will suddenly say ‘no’ and try to defend; you know, keep that person from being taken,” Garcetti told “Latino USA.” “That’s a very dangerous situation. That’s dangerous for those officers. That’s dangerous for those agents. And we’re going to have to respond.”

I have written about immigration enforcement in previous articles, specifically referencing Special Order 40 (1979), which states that we do NOT stop folks for the sole purpose of determining their immigration status. Heck, we don’t have the resources to do our job, let alone the job of ICE. However, we do work in partnership with all law enforcement, with some very successful outcomes.

Recently, a joint task force took down over 20 MS-13 gang members, the result of a three-year racketeering investigation. At least two dozen locations were targeted, with 44 gang members identified as facing federal charges—including murder. Our officers were part of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Task Force on Violent Gangs, working with the FBI and the ATF. What was buried in the news coverage was that according to Acting United States Attorney Sandra Brown, a significant number of those named in the indictment are in the U.S. illegally. However, our own Chief chimed in to remind folks that MS-13 preys on immigrants without legal status. What he omitted was that those here lawfully and who are law abiding are also victimized by gang crime. But that doesn't suit the political narrative today.

Beck went on to recount his experience in dealing with MS-13 over 35 years ago, in which he has "...seen MS evolve from a small-time group from El Salvador that banded together after fleeing the civil war to protect themselves from other street gangs, into a transnational organization that has tentacles that have spread all over North America." Oh, so they were fleeing civil war in El Salvador and sought refuge here? Then, once here, they continued their criminal enterprise? Hmm, this sounds vaguely familiar. Enter a country as a refugee and form your own criminal enterprise. It seems ISIS took a page out of the MS-13 playbook.

And how does this affect our own front line? Let's see. We arrest criminals and put them in jail. But criminal activity has been decriminalized and folks are being released at an ever-increasing rate with AB 109 and Prop 47 and 57, so criminals spend very little time there. Now, we have Senate Bill 54 in the works, the sanctuary state bill that prevents federal immigration agents from taking custody of illegal immigrants being released from California jails. So, these criminals will re-offend with no consequence as we attempt to predict where they will strike again and phone in our recap every few hours.

One voice of reason has emerged, and he is quite familiar to most of us. Sheriff Jim McDonnell, our former Assistant Chief, has found himself on the opposite of the prevailing political agenda. He has opposed the "sanctuary state" bill that prevents federal immigration agents from taking custody of people being released from California jails. Sheriff McDonnell, together with other sheriff s who oversee jails, believe this policy is more harmful to immigrants and should not be a political issue. McDonnell said, "I am just a cop. I am about protecting public safety. I am getting hit by the Trump administration...one day, and then the next day getting called anti-immigrant." He also correctly observed that if ICE cannot pick up offenders in jail, they will go looking for these folks on the streets, causing those with them to be more fearful of any law enforcement agency, thus less likely to cooperate. According to McDonnell, ICE agents "are going to have no choice but to go into the communities and arrest not only the individual they are seeking, but also people who are with that person or other people in the area who are undocumented. That is something none of us want."

And McDonnell has every reason to be concerned. The Trump administration named the L.A. County Sheriff 's Department on a list of local agencies that "endanger Americans" by failing to hand over all of the jail inmates requested by immigration authorities. In California, sheriff s can comply with ICE holds on those inmates who have been arrested for specific serious or violent crimes or who have prior convictions for certain crimes.

The sanctuary state bill, SB 54, limits the information ICE receives about inmates in county jails, making it harder for immigration agents to know who is behind bars. In addition, sheriff s would not be able to share databases with ICE or provide an inmate's release date. Of even greater concern is that notification of those convicted of certain felonies would not be made to ICE, but to the FBI. So, if this passes, we cannot even talk to ICE about who is in custody or when they will be released. In essence, we will be committing the federal crime of harboring illegal aliens.

Eric Garcetti wants a national profile and a path to Washington, D.C. Well, another round of riots will do that. And then he can play hero as he surveys the burned-out rubble of the City and vows to rebuild, coming together with all Angelenos. But what did he do to prevent this from happening? Nothing that I can see.

Watch your back and be safe.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at JamieMcBride@lappl.org or contact me at (805) 208-3103.