Press Release

For Immediate Release · 11/18/26

Elected Leaders Call on Every Stanislaus County Jurisdiction to Adopt Policy in Response to Immigration Enforcement

Stanislaus County – In response to increased ICE activity across the county, Stanislaus County elected officials are issuing a joint statement calling on every city, the County, and every school district to adopt Response to Immigration Enforcement policies that keep public property a safe and welcoming place for all residents. Elected officials are also calling on the Sheriff and local law enforcement to uphold those policies in their corresponding jurisdictions.

"Over the past several weeks, ICE has significantly increased their presence in Stanislaus County. Just this weekend, our tight-knit community was shaken when a neighbor was detained in their own front yard," stated Rachel Hernandez, Mayor of Riverbank. In Modesto, agents have been observed outside of the county jail and moving through heavily populated Latino neighborhoods. Rapid response networks are documenting a troubling pattern across the county that is perpetuating fear amongst our communities.

Stanislaus County is a majority-Latino county. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 51% of our residents are Hispanic or Latino, and one in five were born outside the United States. In the last month and a half alone, our local rapid response network has received almost 100 reports of ICE presence in Stanislaus County, and more than a dozen have been confirmed and led to detentions. The fear in our communities is real, and it is grounded in confirmed reporting. This affects not just undocumented individuals, but the entire community.

"Our community is scared. In April 2026, ICE officers shot Carlos Ivan Mendoza Hernandez during an enforcement operation in Patterson. This incident left many residents with serious questions and heightened fear," Gabriela "Gaby" Hernandez, Mayor-elect of Patterson shared in a call for clear action.

City leaders have a responsibility to keep our communities informed and safe. Since January of last year, we have focused on clarity, education, and trust. That work continues, and now it is time for policy that matches it.

Local governments do not write federal immigration law, but we do decide how our own property, staff, and resources are used. Modesto City Schools has brought forward a Response to Immigration Enforcement policy (BP 1445) so that every school site is a safe and welcoming place for all students, families, and staff, regardless of immigration status. It is a model every jurisdiction in this county can build on: no access to nonpublic areas of public property, vehicles, or programs for immigration enforcement without a judicial warrant, judicial subpoena, or court

order; no collecting or sharing residents' immigration information unless the law requires it; and timely reporting of every request for access or records. Cities and counties across California, from San Jose to Sacramento, have adopted similar protections built on the California Values Act (SB 54). Stanislaus County deserves the same.

We are calling on:

1. **Every city council in Stanislaus County** (Ceres, Hughson, Modesto, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Riverbank, Turlock, and Waterford) to adopt a Response to Immigration Enforcement policy or ordinance covering city property, facilities, vehicles, and programs.
2. **The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors** to adopt the same protections for county property, including county parks, offices, and facilities.
3. **Every school board in the county** to follow Modesto City Schools' lead and adopt a Response to Immigration Enforcement policy for its students, families, and staff.
4. **Sheriff Jeff Dirkse and every police chief in the county** to uphold these policies on the property they cover once adopted, to hold strictly to the limits of the California Values Act, and to tell the public plainly how and when ICE is given access to people in the county jail, including at the public forum the state's TRUTH Act requires.
5. **We also call upon our Valley's congressional representatives**, Congressmen Adam Gray, Josh Harder, and Tom McClintock. Immigration policy is fundamentally a federal responsibility and we need work toward comprehensive, practical, and humane immigration reform that provides clarity, accountability, and a path forward.

We will bring this forward through the public process in our own cities, and we ask our colleagues across the county to do the same.

To our residents: know your rights. You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to open your door unless agents show a warrant signed by a judge. If you see enforcement activity, stay calm, document what you safely can, and look out for one another. To get connected to resources or report activity, please contact Valley Watch Network at 559-206-0151.

We stand committed to those affected by this situation, and to continuing to support our community.

In Partnership,

[NAME], [TITLE, JURISDICTION]

Note: This is intended to be a statement for Stanislaus County elected officials to sign on in their individual capacity so as to avoid Brown Act Violations. Questions can be directed to: Rachel Hernandez, Mayor of Riverbank or Chris Ricci, Councilmember in Modesto.