“Crossing the Line: U.S. Sheriffs Colluding with the Anti-Immigrant Movement” exposes the ways in which nativist groups have recruited county sheriffs to help implement dangerous anti-immigrant policies that split up families, intimidate survivors of violence, and deport people to their deaths.

These are exactly the results that the contemporary anti-immigrant movement has long been seeking: a drastic increase in deportations and attrition through enforcement, with the end goal of maintaining and expanding a white majority in the U.S. Anti-immigrant groups also increasingly uphold these sheriffs as experts to legitimize their nativist agenda nationally.

Sheriffs have much to gain from this relationship: a national profile, funded trips, and filling their county coffers by detaining immigrants. But they also have more to lose. Some sheriffs have actively sought to hide their relationship with anti-immigrant groups from the public, as revealed by internal emails gathered from multiple public records requests.

Since its founding nearly 40 years ago, the organized anti-immigrant movement has sought to partner with officials sympathetic to its nativist agenda. In its early days, the movement looked to lawmakers willing to champion anti-immigrant policies, both in Washington, D.C. and in statehouses across the country. These measures have been undeniably successful. Several members of Congress now boast ties to Beltway anti-immigrant groups that go back decades. These relationships have provided the anti-immigrant movement with reliable allies who have aided in the obstruction of several meaningful immigration reform packages in Congress—most notably in 2006-2007 and 2013-2014.

In recent years, the anti-immigrant movement has more actively sought support from another important group of officials: county sheriffs nationwide. This report details how the anti-immigrant movement has cultivated these law enforcement partners and how they collude to achieve nativist goals.

The anti-immigrant movement today is led by three Washington, D.C.-based organizations. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the movement’s flagship organization, was founded in 1979. The think
tank Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and grassroots mobilizing group NumbersUSA were founded in 1985 and 1996, respectively. All three organizations were founded either by or with assistance from John Tanton, a white nationalist and proponent of eugenics. Tanton in 1993 wrote to a colleague, "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that." Tanton's overtly racist views have attracted widespread criticism over the years, in response to which he has significantly reduced his direct involvement with the groups he created. Yet his influence on these groups is undeniable.

The current leaders of FAIR, CIS, and NumbersUSA downplay the significance of Tanton's stewardship, but continue to advocate for extreme measures that marginalize immigrant communities and encourage devastating attrition through enforcement policies. Such policies have the goal of making life so unstable and dangerous for immigrants that they are forced to leave the country. By courting sheriffs sympathetic to nativist policies, the anti-immigrant movement has developed law enforcement allies who have considerable power to target and intimidate immigrant communities. Together, anti-immigrant groups and law enforcement are working to expand an already overzealous immigration enforcement program and deportation regime that has ripped apart families and instilled fear in immigrant homes across the country.

**RECRUITING SHERIFFS TO A NATIVIST AGENDA**

Cultivating relationships with law enforcement officials and sheriffs is a relatively new phenomenon for the anti-immigrant movement, but it has long been one of their goals. In its December 2005-January 2006 newsletter, FAIR noted that “Creating coalitions with police and sheriff’s [sic] departments all across the country to confront the issues posed by mass immigration has been a key FAIR goal for many years.” FAIR eventually realized that goal in 2011 when the group’s staff members met with sheriffs across the country. FAIR produced a promotional video to bolster these efforts, debuting it in St. Louis during a 2011 conference of sheriffs and other law enforcement personnel organized by the National Sheriffs’ Association.

FAIR detailed these efforts in its Annual Report from that year: “In 2011, we identified sheriffs who expressed concerns about illegal immigration,” the report reads. FAIR staff “met with these sheriffs and their deputies, supplied them with a steady stream of information, established regular conference calls so they could share information and experiences, and invited them to come to Washington to meet with FAIR’s senior staff.”

FAIR’s outreach efforts that year culminated with a meeting in Massachusetts between FAIR staff and sheriffs across the country. Meeting participants agreed to form an umbrella group, the National Sheriffs’ Immigration Coalition, with the goal of enhancing cooperation between sheriffs and the anti-immigrant group.
Sheriffs have played an increased role in the anti-immigrant movement’s advocacy efforts following the Massachusetts meeting. The next year, in 2012, FAIR organized its first ever so-called border school for sheriffs in El Paso, Texas. FAIR noted in its 2012 annual report that it had extended invitations to every county sheriff in the contiguous United States. Ultimately, FAIR claimed, “More than 60 federal, state, county and city law enforcement officers from across the country participated.” One of the officers participating in the two-day event was Sheriff Thomas Hodgson, of Bristol County, Massachusetts. FAIR claimed Hodgson “was so impressed with the ‘school,’ he signed on to host an all-day training session in his jurisdiction.” Hodgson later became one of the anti-immigrant group’s most strident law enforcement allies.

Despite Hodgson’s endorsement, FAIR’s recruitment event did draw some scrutiny. When inviting sheriffs, FAIR used materials suggesting the event was sanctioned by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program (HIDTA), a U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) program. FAIR’s flyer for the event featured HIDTA’s official logo and stated that participants’ travel and lodging costs “may be covered by your agency’s HIDTA funding.” ONDCP officials sternly rebuked that claim.

“In no way is the ‘border school’ sanctioned, co-hosted, or endorsed by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program,” Rafael Lemaitre, ONDCP’s associate director for public affairs, told the Southern Poverty Law Center. “Any use of the program’s logo to imply support for this conference is unacceptable, and the local HIDTA director has asked for this to be corrected as soon as possible,” Lemaitre added. “Additionally, at no time have any HIDTA training funds been requested or been approved for use in association with this conference.”

FAIR typically provides financial assistance for some sheriffs seeking to attend the event. Others use local taxpayer funds or, in the case of North Carolina’s Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson and Rockingham County Sheriff Sam Page, funds from the
Department of Justice’s Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section.

FAIR has organized similar border school events near the U.S.-Mexico border in recent years, and has invested significant resources to make the experience as appealing as possible for sheriffs. In a September 25, 2015 message to Indiana’s Allen County Sheriffs’ Office, obtained by the Center for New Community via public records request, former FAIR field representative Robert Najmulski wrote, “we value the sheriffs we meet so we do all we can to roll out the red carpet.” Sheriffs who benefit from that generosity and attend such events encounter a series of FAIR-approved extremists. FAIR’s most recent border school event, in October 2015, featured a presentation by former Arizona sheriff and prominent anti-government extremist Richard Mack.

That year’s event also included a visit to the Vickers Ranch, which serves as headquarters to the extremist border vigilante group Texas Border Volunteers. Group leader Linda Vickers has boasted of sending her dogs to chase immigrants, causing them to seek refuge in trees. “Sorry, but it was so funny to see this IA [illegal alien] on one side of the fence running parallel with my dogs on the other side,” Vickers wrote in a now-deleted Facebook post. Former members of the Texas Border Volunteers told The Texas Observer in 2014 that the group’s extreme and sometimes illegal actions, though underreported and not well-known, have inspired several people to leave the group. “Texas Border Volunteers operates as a militia in plain sight and no one is calling them on it. They’ve done a good job at suppressing what they do,” one former member said.

“They are essentially unlawfully detaining people,” said another. “That is part of the reason I left.”

FAIR’s focus on and association with extremist groups and individuals like Mack underscore how little educational merit FAIR’s events offer to law enforcement. Despite the lack of accreditation or meaningful training value, some sheriffs are quite supportive of the effort.

In advance of FAIR’s 2014 event, FAIR National Field Director Susan Tully requested that Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack, of Oregon, help circulate a flyer promoting the event. Matlack obliged several days later,

SAM PAGE has been sheriff of Rockingham County, North Carolina, since 1998. While he has not entered into a 287(g) agreement with ICE, he maintains a close working relationship with the anti-immigrant movement and serves as a strident advocate of nativist policies. Page has used taxpayer dollars to attend events organized by anti-immigrant groups like FAIR’s “border school,” despite their lack of accreditation or training merit. Page has used his relationship with the anti-immigrant movement to gain access to policy makers in Washington, D.C. This includes meeting with President Trump “on several occasions,” according to his office’s website.
asking Oregon Sheriffs’ Association representatives to promote the event to all sheriffs in the state.

"It's a great school put on by the Federation for American Immigration (FAIR) with no political agenda but rather information put on by law enforcement and others who are in the trenches every day and know what is really going on with the cartels and immigration issues on the border,” Matlack wrote in an August 7, 2014 email obtained via public records request by the Center for New Community.

The following year, FAIR held another border event for law enforcement in McAllen, Texas. Matlack again wrote to the Oregon Sheriffs’ Association with glowing praise. “Border school is excellent training. They are very interested in getting more Sheriffs to attend especially Oregon,” Matlack wrote in a September 29, 2015 email. "I am going again this year. I hope some others from Oregon can attend.”

The willingness of sheriffs like Matlack to promote FAIR’s events raises serious concerns about extremist influences on law enforcement. These events further entrench the anti-immigrant movement’s presence in the law enforcement community and may inspire other officials to collaborate with extremist groups.

RICHARD MACK has been active in the far-right, anti-government “Patriot” movement for more than two decades. In the 1990s, Mack was sheriff of Graham County, Arizona and lionized in far-right circles for challenging federal gun violence legislation in court. Mack now leads the far-right Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA). CSPOA supporters embrace Mack’s view of county sheriffs being the sole legal authority that can protect citizens from the federal government—a central belief of the racist, conspiracy-minded Posse Comitatus movement.

One year before speaking at FAIR’s border event, Mack held a prominent role in the April 2014 armed standoff with federal agents in Nevada at the home of tax-delinquent rancher Cliven Bundy. Speaking with reporters during the standoff, Mack revealed plans to use women as human shields in the event shots were fired. “We were actually strategizing to put all the women up at the front,” Mack told Fox News. “If they are going to start shooting, it’s going to be women that are going to be televised all across the world getting shot by these rogue federal officers.” Mack was similarly involved in protests leading to far-right militiamen occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon for 41 days in early 2016.
FROM THE BORDER TO THE BELTWAY

The anti-immigrant movement’s coordination with sheriffs is not limited to non-accredited trainings and photo opportunities near the U.S.-Mexico border. The movement has also used its influence to increase the visibility and role sheriffs have in immigration policy discussions on Capitol Hill. Perhaps the most notable of these attempts is FAIR’s annual media event, Hold Their Feet to the Fire, which occurs steps away from the U.S. Capitol. The event gathers upwards of 50 right-wing radio hosts across the country for two days of immigration-focused talk on the airwaves. Several sheriffs have become regular fixtures during the event’s radio row, with some like Massachusetts’s Thomas Hodgson and North Carolina’s Sam Page parlaying that exposure into appearances on national television, both on cable news channels and in advertisements produced by anti-immigrant groups. FAIR’s annual event also concludes with an evening gala, which has previously included honoring one of its guests with a “People’s Sheriff” award.

Some sheriffs have benefitted from their ties to groups like FAIR, using the relationship to increase their own public profile, and even testifying before Congress on immigration matters. Leveraging their relationships with lawmakers on particular committees, the anti-immigrant movement has been able to place sheriffs who have embraced the movement’s nativist agenda on witness panels and hearings on Capitol Hill at least eight times since 2011. In their testimony, FAIR-affiliated sheriffs frequently express support for draconian immigration enforcement measures, advancing the dangerous notion that local police should enforce federal immigration laws. This is a narrative that the anti-immigrant movement has frequently supported in both its messaging and actions, such as drafting Arizona’s notorious SB 1070 “show me your papers” bill and aiding in the legal defense of the legislation.

HOLD THEIR FEET TO THE FIRE is an annual event organized by flagship anti-immigrant group FAIR. Beginning in 2007, FAIR has organized the event in Washington, D.C., inviting dozens of talk radio hosts from across the country to broadcast and intermingle with activists, law enforcement personnel, and lawmakers aligned with the anti-immigrant movement. Attendees in past years have included white nationalists like Roan Garcia-Quintana and Marcus Epstein. Anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist Frank Gaffney also recorded his radio show at the event in 2014, evidencing FAIR’s continued commitment to providing a platform for bigotry.

In their advocacy on Capitol Hill and with media, sheriffs with ties to the anti-immigrant movement disingenuously cite the 287(g) program as an invaluable resource. Local law enforcement jurisdictions that enter into 287(g) agreements with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are trained by and allowed to collaborate with federal officials--dangerously broadening the federal government’s ability to enforce immigration laws. Proponents of the program reliably fail
to note how the program damages community relations with police, creates significant costs for localities, and has led to racial profiling. They also fail to note how sheriffs in some 287(g) jurisdictions have filled their department’s coffers using the program in tandem with another federal program that pays police departments to detain immigrants in local facilities. As 《The Austin American-Statesman》 reported in July, the arrangement creates "a profit incentive for local law enforcement agencies to aggressively pursue unauthorized immigrants in their communities."

Anti-immigrant sheriffs’ interactions with federal lawmakers are not limited to congressional hearings.

In March 2017, Sheriff Scott Jones of Sacramento County hosted a public forum with Trump’s Acting ICE Director Thomas Homan, the administration official responsible for ramping up deportations. Jones is an alumnus of FAIR’s 2015 Hold Their Feet to the Fire. Emails obtained by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and other immigrant rights groups, and later reported by the 《Los Angeles Times》, revealed that Jones invited Homan explicitly in order to change public opinion about the California Values Act (SB 54), a bill that would restrict state and local governments from using their resources for mass deportations. Jones wrote that he was pleased to have become “the face of the anti-SB 54 campaign.”

In April 2013, then-U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) held a press conference in a Senate office building as his colleagues unveiled a bipartisan plan to overhaul the U.S. immigration system. Massachusetts Sheriff Thomas Hodgson, who was in D.C. attending FAIR’s Hold Their Feet to the Fire, spoke at the press conference and used the opportunity to assail undocumented immigrants. Hodgson claimed immigrants are “creating public health hazards, public safety concerns.”

Troublingly, Hodgson has continued to position himself as a leader on immigration issues among law enforcement officials. Likely inspired by the increased profile the anti-immigrant movement and its congressional allies have afforded him, Hodgson called on sheriffs nationwide to join him in Washington, D.C. for a press conference advocating for anti-immigrant measures. Hodgson wrote that strident anti-immigrant Sens. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) and David Vitter (R-LA) would join participating sheriffs at the event.

“I am respectfully asking that you join me and our brother and sister Sheriffs on December 10, 2014 in at [sic] the United States Capitol to encourage immediate action by Congress and the Administration to pass legislation that will secure border security once and for all," Hodgson wrote in a letter first made publicly available by the conservative 《National Review Online》.

Like many of the anti-immigrant movement’s calls to action, Hodgson’s letter was replete with distortions and outright falsehoods intended to disparage immigrants. For example, the letter speciously claimed that “25 people in the United States are killed each day by illegal immigrants.” When the Center for New Community contacted Hodgson about the origins of that dubious statistic, he was unable to provide a source. The figure, however, has been circulated on the nativist right for years. The origin of this
claim can be traced back to remarks made in 2006 by Rep. Steve King (R-IA), a far-right demagogue and staunch ally of the anti-immigrant movement. King claims he “extrapolated” the figure from a Government Accounting Office report. The result, however, is a fundamental misreading of criminal statistics. When applied to 2015 crime statistics, King’s extrapolation ludicrously suggests undocumented immigrants—an estimated 4% of the population—are responsible for 58% of all homicides in the United States.

Speaking with the Center for New Community in November 2014, Hodgson also dodged questions about whether national anti-immigrant groups like FAIR or NumbersUSA were involved in organizing his press conference. It turns out they were. A November 20, 2014 email sent by Hodgson’s office indicates that FAIR National Field Director Susan Tully coordinated hotel accommodations for sheriffs traveling to D.C. for the event. The message also included an itinerary noting the sheriffs would begin their day meeting at FAIR’s D.C. office for lunch prior to their meeting with lawmakers.

In his initial letter calling for the December 10 press conference, Hodgson said he hoped to recruit "at least 200 Sheriffs to travel to Washington, D.C. for this historic meeting and press conference with members of Congress." FAIR reserved 120 hotel rooms to accommodate the expected visiting sheriffs. Photos taken during the press conference revealed that fewer than two dozen sheriffs actually attended. Other participants were not even active law enforcement officers. Anti-government zealot Richard Mack, who was photographed at the event, later told the Southern Poverty Law Center he did not assist in organizing the event, but “was invited to attend and we provided a little hors d’oeuvres.”

U.S. REP. STEVE KING of Iowa is one of the most virulently nativist members of Congress and a strident ally of the organized anti-immigrant movement. With little to no legislative accomplishments to his name, King has developed a long-running history of incendiary comments and white nationalist appeals. During an appearance on MSNBC last year, King told writer Charles Pierce that people of color have not contributed to civilization.

“This whole ‘white people’ business, though, does get a little tired, Charlie,” King said. “I mean, I’d ask you to go back through history and figure out, where are these contributions that have been made by these other categories of people that you’re talking about? Where did any other sub-group of people contribute to civilization?”

Hodgson’s event did have support from the National Sheriffs’ Association. Following Hodgson’s announcement, the organization issued a November 14, 2014 statement: “The National Sheriffs’ Association fully reaffirms the right of each Sheriff, as an election official and policy maker, to participate in this discussion whether it be in Washington D.C., their state capitols, or in their home counties.”
It would not be the first or last time the National Sheriffs’ Association would support the activities of the anti-immigrant movement.

**NATIVISM FROM THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS’ ASSOCIATION**

Founded in 1940, the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) describes itself as “a professional association dedicated to serving the Office of Sheriff and its affiliates through police education, police training, and general law enforcement information resources.” The NSA has formally embraced the nativism espoused by the anti-immigrant movement in recent years.

**Blurring Borders: Collusion between Anti-Immigrant Groups and Immigration Enforcement Agents**

In the 2015 report *Blurring Borders* the Center for New Community detailed how the anti-immigrant movement has developed a working relationship with unions representing immigration enforcement and Border Patrol agents. While not an official union, the NSA plays a similar role advocating for the country’s sheriffs and now seems keen to develop a similar relationship with leading anti-immigrant groups.

NSA Executive Director Jonathan F. Thompson was a featured speaker at FAIR’s October 2015 border school. Thompson has similarly authored multiple op-eds published by Beltway newspaper *The Hill* on topics ranging from local police enforcing federal immigration law to Jeff Sessions’s nascent tenure as U.S. Attorney General. Predictably, the op-eds on these topics reliably feature messaging that bears a striking resemblance to that espoused by anti-immigrant leaders.

Part of FAIR’s outreach work with sheriffs involves sponsoring and exhibiting at official NSA events. FAIR was a sponsor of the NSA’s January 20–25, 2015 Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. The anti-immigrant group also had an exhibition booth at the NSA’s February 4–7, 2017 conference.

The relationship between FAIR and the NSA extends beyond the groups’ respective events. The NSA has also attached its name to FAIR’s legal work. FAIR’s legal arm, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), submitted an amicus brief with the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals supporting over two dozen states challenging Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA), a temporary deportation program proposed by President Obama. IRLI submitted the brief on behalf of FAIR, the NSA and The Remembrance Project, another anti-immigrant group. The case, *Texas v. United States*, was withdrawn shortly following the Trump administration’s announcement that it would end the DAPA program. While FAIR and IRLI did not disclose it at the time, a 2016 report from the Center for New Community, *IRLI Beginnings*, detailed how the anti-immigrant groups were integrally involved in the litigation efforts against DAPA.

**IRLI Beginnings: The Immigration Reform Law Institute and the Anti-Immigrant Origins of Texas v. United States**
JOHN GUANDOLO, a disgraced former FBI agent and anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist, has also been given a platform at recent National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) events. Guandolo and his consulting outfit, Understanding the Threat, have led training sessions at two NSA conferences in 2017. Like other anti-Muslim propagandists, Guandolo is committed to espousing conspiracy theories about Muslims infiltrating the U.S. Government. He has claimed Muslims “do not have a First Amendment right to do anything” and regularly derides Muslim advocacy organizations as “suit-wearing jihadis.”

Guandolo’s conspiracy-minded presentations are particularly troubling because they are frequently tailored to law enforcement personnel. Current NSA President Greg Champagne has endorsed Guandolo’s bigoted trainings as “the only training program for law enforcement in the nation which actually gives officers ways to proactively find terrorists in their communities, map out the terrorist network in the community, and create innovative investigative strategies to aggressively tackle the threat at the local level.” For more information, please see the Center for New Community report Islamophobia Academy: How Anti-Muslim Operatives are Indoctrinating Local Police.

FAIR has spent significant money to deepen and publicize its relationships with sheriffs and the NSA. In August 2016, the group announced a new television advertisement featuring four county sheriffs. In a press release, FAIR described a "multi-week ad campaign" that would “air more than 40 times nationally and in key markets in Wisconsin and North Carolina.” Records from the Federal Communications Commission indicate FAIR’s ad blitz was a six-figure endeavor, with the group spending at least $133,200 across Wisconsin and North Carolina markets.

Shortly after Inauguration Day 2017, FAIR produced another ad featuring sheriffs, including NSA President and Saint Charles Parish, Louisiana Sheriff Greg Champagne. The ad, "Sheriffs Standing with Trump on Immigration Enforcement,” shows Champagne thanking the new president "for agreeing to stop illegal immigration and restore the rule of law."

A GROWING LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

Collaboration between the anti-immigrant movement and sheriffs shows no sign of ending anytime soon. Sometime between August 26, 2016 and September 25, 2016, FAIR quietly updated the staff listing on its website. The change revealed that one of the group’s field organizers, Robert Najmulski, assumed a new role with the organization: Law Enforcement Relations Manager. FAIR did not employ any previous employee in that role. Indeed, it appears Najmulski, himself a former police officer, is now working to build upon the relationships FAIR has cultivated.
with law enforcement officers, particularly sheriffs.

The lengths some sheriffs are going to conceal their associations with anti-immigrant groups is even more troubling. The Center for New Community has obtained evidence that multiple sheriffs are communicating with representatives from anti-immigrant groups using personal email addresses. Messages sent and received from these personal accounts are not easily subject to public disclosure, violating widespread transparency expectations for public officials.

Multiple messages from FAIR staff to sheriffs reveal that several of the anti-immigrant movement’s most visible allies are communicating with the organization via non-government Gmail accounts. Obtained emails reveal that Sheriffs Thomas Hodgson of Bristol County, Massachusetts, and Sam Page of Rockingham County, North Carolina appear to employ these deceptive communication practices. Sheriff Charles “Chuck” Jenkins, of Frederick County, Maryland, has more recently imitated their efforts, further concealing his own communications with FAIR staff.

One day after the Center for New Community submitted a public records request seeking copies of Frederick County, Maryland, Sheriff Charles “Chuck” Jenkins’ communications with anti-immigrant groups, he wrote to FAIR’s Susan Tully requesting all future messages be sent to a personal address.

"I was going to tell you to email everything to my home," Jenkins wrote before supplying an email address with a "comcast.net" suffix.

Tully was happy to accommodate Jenkins’ information suppression effort. One minute after Jenkins’ message was sent, Tully responded: "Okay I mailed it to your other address too."

The content of Tully’s initial message to Jenkins should not be ignored. It was a copy of a model ordinance written by FAIR’s legal arm aiming to further embolden local law enforcement to act as federal immigration agents, needlessly and dangerously pitting local police against the immigrant community.

"Here is some model legislation we talked about that you can use," Tully wrote. "Please let me know if there is anything else we can do to help you!"

CHARLES “CHUCK” JENKINS has been sheriff of Frederick County, Maryland since 2006. Jenkins’ office has entered into a 287(g) agreement with the federal government and is a staunch proponent of the program. Jenkins has attended multiple events organized by anti-immigrant groups, both in Washington, D.C. and along the U.S.-Mexico border. On May 2, 2013, he professed his loyalty in an email to FAIR’s then-Press Secretary, Kristen Williamson. "I am your most vocal ally up here in rural Maryland," Jenkins wrote.
Other emails between Jenkins and Tully suggest both parties are happy to keep details of their collaborations under wraps. Shortly after Jenkins returned from a FAIR-organized trip to McAllen, Texas in 2014, a reporter for the local Frederick News-Post contacted him. “Now that you have been back for a few days, I’m hoping that you could take some time to speak with me about your travels and experiences,” the journalist wrote. Jenkins sternly rebuked the reporter, accusing the paper of “low-brow style reporting, slander, and bias.”

"I have no intention of speaking with the [News-Post] in any regard about the trip," Jenkins added.

Jenkins forwarded the response to Tully several hours later. Tully relished Jenkins’ rebuke of one of his jurisdiction’s largest media outlets: "Wonderful, you had a great response! Keep up the good work! God Bless!"

CONCLUSION

The ongoing collusion between the National Sheriffs’ Association, individual sheriffs, and the organized anti-immigrant movement is immensely troubling for anyone seeking to improve the U.S. criminal justice system. As democratically elected law enforcement officials, sheriffs have an obligation to ensure that all residents in their jurisdictions are treated fairly. By publicly aligning with extremist anti-immigrant groups, these sheriffs undermine their standing as impartial enforcers of the law.

At a time when communities are, perhaps more than ever, calling for increased police accountability and reform across the country, sheriffs must lead by example. Partnering with nativist groups and advocating for a shared agenda of disdain and destruction aimed at immigrant communities stands in direct contradiction to those efforts. Sheriffs aligning themselves with these nativist factions aren’t just betraying their constituents, they are betraying the very values that Americans hold dear, such as equal treatment under the law.