

On the Front Line

Contributed by PT Editors
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What does immigration policy mean to those who enforce it at a local level? PT went to America's border and its heartland to find out.

AMERICA'S "QUIET" BORDER

What's it like protecting a small town on America's northern border? PT spoke with Blaine, Washington Chief of Police Mike Haslip to find out.

PT: Does Blaine have a problem with undocumented workers, or immigrants living there illegally?

Chief Haslip: My sense is that Blaine has less of a problem of resident illegal aliens than many cities our size simply because of the large community of federal law enforcement officers who work and reside here. Blaine police officers share common radio frequencies with U.S. Border Patrol agents because we work so closely together, hour by hour and day by day. We share information and resources with Border Patrol, CBP and ICE wherever possible, and thereby help offset the sense of vulnerability that might otherwise arise from living in a border community.

PT: How do you think immigration policy could improve, both on the federal and state level?

Chief Haslip: U.S. immigration policy could improve by acknowledging the critical role that local criminal justice agencies play in border security. There are many instances where local officers develop the information or make the observations which lead to interdiction of criminal illegal alien activity. Especially on the northern border, local jurisdictions are asked to absorb a disproportionate share of the cost of this interdiction activity. To improperly recognize this impact does a disservice to the security of the United States as a whole, as well as diminishing the effectiveness of those local efforts.

THE ENFORCER

Over a period of 18 months, enforcement agencies in Allen County, Ohio, have deported 83 illegal aliens, making it one of the most aggressive communities in the Midwest to crack down on illegal immigration. PT spoke with Sheriff Daniel Beck to find out the details.

PT: Why are you so insistent upon cracking down on illegal immigrants?

Sheriff Beck: Allen County has a very high unemployment rate. The biggest lie that has been spread from pro-immigration folks is that the illegals are doing the jobs that Americans won't do—that's entirely untrue. They never finish that sentence. Illegals in many cases are doing work that Americans won't do…for the amount employers are willing to pay. Since many companies do not pay a living wage, our entire society is paying the fringe benefits for those companies; we are subsidizing those companies.

PT: Would you say that your attitude about immigration reflects your political affiliations, or those of your community?

Sheriff Beck: We are a strongly conservative county; there are twice as many Republicans as there are Democrats. Having said that, I am an Independent, and this is my 15th year as Sheriff. I don't have any direct political friends, no big money friends, I just do my job and I have a good rapport with the people in this community. We've gotten quite a bit of publicity out of it [the deportations], but I'm not going to dodge the bullet. One thing that I've found that my people appreciate is that good, bad or ugly, I'm going to stand up for my county.