

Press Release for:
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Arlington and Santa Clara Join SF In Demanding to Opt Out of Flawed ICE Program

Santa Clara, CA and Arlington, VA County Boards Unanimously Vote to Opt Out of ICE's Controversial S-Comm Program

Arlington, San Francisco, and Santa Clara – The Santa Clara Board of Supervisors and the Arlington County Board both voted unanimously on Tuesday, September 28th, to opt out of S-Comm, which is a controversial Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data sharing program also known as Secure Communities. Both resolutions are available at <http://uncoverthetruth.org>.

A broad coalition of civil rights groups applaud Santa Clara and Arlington for joining San Francisco in requesting to opt out of ICE's dangerous fingerprinting program. S-Comm is a program that automatically shares with ICE any fingerprints taken by local law enforcement right after individuals are arrested, even if the criminal charges are eventually dismissed or the result of an unlawful arrest. The program has sparked strong opposition from civil rights organizations, law enforcement, and city officials from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, over concerns it is being forced on hundreds of counties without any mechanism for oversight or accountability.

Jill Malone from Justice For Immigrants Catholic Campaign in Santa Clara, states, "I applaud the Board of Supervisors for taking a unified stand against S-Comm. This has been a long journey with the Board of Supervisors and we will continue to work with them to demand that ICE follows its policy and allow local jurisdictions to opt out. By opting out of this program our community will feel safer and will be able to reach out to local law enforcement for the protection of themselves and the great community."

“In places S-Comm is in effect, the integrity of law enforcement is undermined because this program breeds mistrust and misuse of law enforcement,” commented Lucero Beebe-Guidice of Tenants and Workers United in response to the Arlington County Board’s passage of the resolution against S-Comm, “We, through the Arlington Coalition Against the S-Comm Program, whole-heartedly support the Arlington County Board for having the foresight to oppose the use of local resources and law officers to enforce federal immigration laws. Arlington County has prospered because of its deep investment to cultivate trust and collaboration between the community and public servants. The resolution passed tonight demonstrates that the Board holds steadfast to core values of community that make Arlington a wonderful place to live. We urge local officials across Virginia to do the same.”

On August 17, 2010, ICE issued a statement that confirms local jurisdictions have a right to opt out by sending a written request. Recently, Secretary Janet Napolitano and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder also have both confirmed in writing that local jurisdictions can opt of S-Comm by requesting to do so in writing. Sheriff Hennessey in San Francisco has already submitted this request in writing on at least two occasions, most recently on August 31st. San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors also passed a resolution to opt out of S-Comm on May 18th.

Angela Chan, staff attorney at the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, urged ICE to comply with their own opt out procedure for all counties requesting to do so. She states, “SF has done everything required of us to opt out. Sheriff Hennessey and our Board of Supervisors have voiced our request to opt out of S-Comm loud and clear. It’s now ICE’s turn to follow through on their word and allow counties to do what has been within our right all along. Only then will we be able to focus our local resources back on local law enforcement. S-Comm has no place in our counties because it makes immigrant victims and witnesses afraid to come forward and cooperate with local law enforcement.”

The resolutions in Santa Clara and Arlington requesting to opt out of S-Comm come a day before 578 national and local organizations deliver a [letter](#) to President Obama condemning the merger of criminal justice and immigration systems, and demanding an end to practices that harm diverse communities throughout the country.¹

For more information on S-Comm, visit <http://uncoverthetruth.org/>

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¹ The letter is available online at http://www.rightsworkinggroup.org/sites/default/files/LtrObamaSept292010_FINAL.pdf.