



Facing Lawsuit, Barnstable County’s New Sheriff Ends Contract With ICE

Move Eliminates Last “287g Agreement” By Sheriffs In New England

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BOSTON — Today, incoming Barnstable County Sheriff Donna Buckley fulfilled her campaign promise to end the Sheriff’s Office’s “287(g) agreement” with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The move follows a lawsuit filed by **Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR)** and **Rights Behind Bars (RBB)** in 2022 on behalf of a statewide coalition of taxpayers, challenging the controversial agreement that has entangled the Sheriff’s Office with federal immigration enforcement.

Today’s action brings an end to all 287(g) agreements between ICE and Sheriff’s Offices in New England. As recently as 2021, there were three such agreements, but all have now been terminated as a result of lawsuits by LCR and RBB and related advocacy:

- In May 2021, the federal government [terminated Bristol County's 287\(g\) agreement](#), following LCR and RBB’s successful COVID-19 [class action](#) that led to the shuttering of Bristol’s immigration detention facility altogether.
- In September 2021, Plymouth County voluntarily [terminated](#) its 287(g) agreement with ICE, following a [favorable ruling](#) in a taxpayer lawsuit also brought by LCR and RBB.

“We applaud Sheriff Buckley for ending this unlawful agreement,” said **Oren Sellstrom, Litigation Director of Lawyers for Civil Rights**. “287(g) agreements have long been maligned, locally and nationally, as a significant source of fear for immigrant communities, and as a drain on state resources.”

“This is an excellent result for immigrant communities in Massachusetts,” said **Oren Nimni, Litigation Director of Rights Behind Bars**. “These unlawful agreements have purported to

allow local sheriffs to engage in federal civil immigration enforcement activities, including arrest, interrogation, and transportation of immigrants—but sheriffs have no such power under Massachusetts law.”

The Massachusetts Department of Correction is now the last agency in the State to maintain a 287(g) agreement with ICE. LCR and RBB call on incoming Governor Maura Healey to follow the lead of Sheriff Buckley and terminate this agreement. Having led Massachusetts’ efforts against anti-immigrant policies as Attorney General, Governor Healey knows that entangling the State in federal immigration enforcement is divisive, costly, and undermines trust in law enforcement. She should take immediate steps to eliminate 287(g) agreements in Massachusetts entirely.

The Barnstable lawsuit is *Russo et al. v. Cummings*, Barnstable Superior Court Civil Action No. 2272CV00247.

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