

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 24, 2002

Demetrios G. Papademetriou
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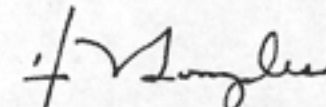
Re: State and local police enforcement of immigration laws

Dear Mr. Papademetriou:

Thank you for your letter regarding the authority of state and local police to enforce immigration laws. I am very much aware of the concerns that you and others have expressed, including the concern expressed by some state and local police that use of this authority would undermine relationships they have worked to build in immigrant communities to assist in fighting crime. I also am very much aware of the concern that has been expressed in immigrant communities.

As you may know, the Attorney General recently announced that the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has concluded that state and local police have inherent authority to arrest and detain persons who are in violation of immigration laws and whose names have been placed in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). NCIC is a database maintained by the FBI and used by federal, state and local law enforcement to identify wanted persons. Only high-risk aliens who fit a terrorist profile will be placed in NCIC. The Administration is taking these measures in its effort to strengthen homeland security and combat terrorism. It is our hope and belief that this narrow authority of state and local police – to arrest and turn over to the Immigration and Naturalization Service possible terrorists who are violating immigration laws and who are in NCIC – will not undermine in any way the relationship between state and local police and immigrant communities, engender fear in immigrant communities, or otherwise encroach on civil liberties.

Sincerely,



Alberto R. Gonzales
Counsel to the President