



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THOMAS M. MENINO

July 8, 2011

HAND DELIVERY

Task Force on Secure Communities
Attn: Mr. Chuck Wexler, Chairman
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

To the Task Force on Secure Communities,

I met this week with leaders of Boston's immigrant communities and my law enforcement team, and what they told me confirms what you are hearing around the country: Secure Communities must change substantially or be scrapped.

As operated now, Secure Communities is diminishing trust, an essential part of the neighborhood fabric and a vital public safety tool. In particular:

1. Secure Communities is negatively impacting public safety. The program is leading community members – including witnesses and victims of crime – to withhold information from the police for fear of deportation;
2. The lack of accuracy and transparency in the data used is worsening these fears; and
3. To address this in part, *criminal actions should be partitioned from administrative ones* so that only serious felony crimes result in Immigration and Customs Enforcement proceedings.

I have asked my Police Commissioner to communicate these problems to you in person and the urgent attention which they demand. If these shared concerns of Boston's immigrant and law enforcement communities are not remedied as part of your review process, the City of Boston cannot participate in Secure Communities as we have.

Boston took part in Secure Communities as a pilot project, with the understanding that only the most serious criminals would be affected and the belief that our feedback would lead to improvements in the program. It would be a further violation of the public trust if instead Secure Communities proves to be a knot that the Federal Government will not untie.

My grandparents came from Italy to Boston, a city now home to almost 200,000 immigrants. I know the full value of trust in our neighborhoods, then and today, and I urge the Task Force's immediate action.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston