

Letter to the Editor
Msnbc.com

I read this story with disappointment, largely because it lacks an objective take on the news, and it includes erroneous information about U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Secure Communities strategy.

First, through this strategy ICE is notified automatically when law enforcement arrest and book aliens for a crime; this process is based on biometrics, in this case fingerprints. Contrary to the reporter's assertion, ICE does not sift through local police records.

Second, ICE is not aware of complaints from elected officials in nearly every state. In fact, of the 685 jurisdictions in which ICE is currently using the federal biometric information sharing capability, ICE is aware of only three jurisdictions that want to opt out. That means 99.6 percent of these jurisdictions have expressed no concerns about Secure Communities. Further, the National Sheriffs' Association, Major County Sheriffs' Association and the New York Association of Chiefs of Police have all signed resolutions in support of Secure Communities.

Third, it's important to note that the federal biometric information sharing capability that ICE is utilizing as part of Secure Communities satisfies a mandate from Congress and is in line with the 9/11 Commission recommendations for better information sharing among agencies. Because Secure Communities relies on this information sharing between federal agencies, local jurisdictions do not need to make a decision as to whether to participate or not.

Again, with support from national law enforcement associations and individual law enforcement officials, ICE is doing its job—ensuring the integrity of our immigration system and putting public safety first through tough, smart immigration enforcement.