

Briefs

PA COURTHOUSES ■ FARMINGTON FRAUD ■ MEASELS ■ IN MEMORIAM

Fear and ICE at Pennsylvania Courthouses

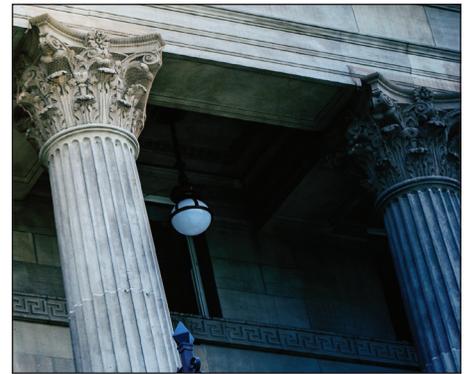
For the undocumented, due process has been hard to find in Pennsylvania lately. A January 2019 report by the Sheller Center for Social Justice at Temple University, “Obstructing Justice: The Chilling Effect of ICE’s Arrests of Immigrants at Pennsylvania Courthouses,” reveals that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has not only increased arrests in the state since 2016, it has also increased aggressiveness as officers opt to lay in wait and arrest people when they show up at courthouses for unrelated matters. More disturbingly, ICE has been assisted by court officials, probation officers, and, in one instance, by a judge who had ICE detain a man over whose wedding the judge presided—in the end, the man turned out to be a legal resident, and AP News reports that he is currently suing the judge.

Attorneys and advocates for the undocumented report that the highly publicized stories of detainments and arrests at courthouses has spread fear

throughout the immigrant community. The manifestation of this fear is that immigrants stop showing up to court or cease reporting crimes as witnesses or victims for fear of being deported.

“The people who were detained in the past were people who were already convicted of fairly serious and deportable offenses,” said Philadelphia immigration lawyer Mike Henry in a WHYY.org article from December 2017. “The enforcement priorities have changed all that, kind of stood it on its head.”

In January 2018, ICE issued a directive detailing procedures for courthouse arrests which states that ICE arrests are to take place in “non-public” areas and that accompanying friends and family members are not to be arrested “absent special circumstances, such as where the individual poses a threat to public safety or interferes with ICE’s enforcement actions.” A footnote to the text leaves the determination of such threat or interference up to the discretion of ICE. ■



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Farmington Hills Fraud

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is expanding its activities in both scope and creativity. On Jan. 31, the Detroit Free Press reported that eight people were arrested and indicted on charges of conspiracy to commit visa fraud and harboring aliens for profit in connection with the University of Farmington in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Across the

nation on Jan. 30, 130 foreign students enrolled at that university were arrested on civil immigration charges.

Federal prosecutors claim that the students knowingly engaged with the university under a “pay-and-stay” scheme, in which their tuition enabled them to enroll in a student visa program and work in the U.S. The University of Farmington, however, was not real; it was created by ICE to attract students

whose original student visas had expired. The eight who were indicted are accused of working as recruiters and for receiving cash and other kickbacks in exchange for bringing in students. Attorneys for the detained who spoke to the Detroit Free Press claim students believed they were enrolled in a legitimate university.

ICE went deep with the ruse. The university had a website (the now-defunct <https://universityoffarmington.edu/>), a real physical address and during the university's operation from February 2017 to January 2019, the university claimed to be approved by the Department of Homeland Security. Likewise, the department listed the university as a legitimate school for foreign students.

Television station WXYZ in Farmington Hills visited the physical address and interviewed people who worked in the building there. They described students with backpacks showing up to the site, looking for information about when



the school was open and attempting to find out about classes. “I feel sad for them because I know some of them didn’t know,” said Steven Jeffers, who works in the building. “I hope they clear it up, clear their name.” ■

Measles Moseys on Back

Declared eradicated in the U.S. in 2000, measles has made a comeback, in large part to alarmingly resilient anti-vaccination propaganda. On Jan. 25., Gov. Jay Inslee of Washington declared a State of Emergency in response to the—at the time—more than two-dozen confirmed cases of measles in Clark County, Washington. As of March 18, the number had risen to 73. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, measles has reared its head in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Texas, bringing the total number of U.S. cases to 268 as of March 14. In 2018, there were 372 reported cases for the entire year.

KOMO News, out of Seattle, reported that “patient zero” of the Washington outbreak traveled to the U.S. from another country before interacting with a large group of unvaccinated children who then carried the disease to a host of public sites, including clinics, schools, a Costco, a Portland Trailblazers basketball game and even across the ocean to the Big Island of Hawaii, according to OregonLive.com—the online edition of The Oregonian.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can linger in the air of an enclosed area for up to two hours after an infected person has left it. Symptoms include cough, runny nose, itchy eyes and a fever, and several days after the initial onset, a rash develops that starts on the head or face before moving down the body. The infected is contagious up to four days before and after the onset of the rash, and complications can include ear infections, pneumonia or total hearing loss.

The measles vaccine is part of a pack of required childhood vaccinations administered usually around 12–15 months of age. An individual can bypass a vaccine, however, through a medical or a personal exemption. Some people cannot be vaccinated due to medical conditions or allergies—thus incurring a medical exemption—so they rely upon the concept of “herd immunity”—wherein everyone around them is vaccinated—to protect them from contracting measles. For

herd immunity to work, the vaccination percentage of the community needs to be between 93 and 95 percent.

One of the reasons measles erupted in Clark County, specifically, is that it has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the state. OregonLive.com reports that only 77.4% of public school children have completed vaccinations.

According to AP News, Washington, among several other states, is currently rethinking its vaccination exemption legislation in hopes of cutting down on the number of personal exemptions. Other states, however, such as Arizona and Montana, are actually considering legislation that could allow for even more personal exemptions. Stay tuned. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Brian D. Rosenthal
April 23, 2017, age 64

Judge Henry E. Oliver
Nov. 26, 2018, age 77

John F. Kennedy Jr.
Feb. 21, 2018, age 68

Joseph McCabe Walker
Feb. 3, 2019, age 82

Joel P. Fishbein
March 2, 2018, age 80

Charles Kopp
Feb. 6, 2019, age 86

Peter Talbot
June 26, 2018, age 93

Lester Krasno
March 11, 2019 age 74

Leon W. Silverman
July 25, 2018, age 78

Noma H. Shaw
Age 73

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