



City of Ranson



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Statement Addressing Community Concerns and Public Safety

The City of Ranson would like to directly respond to recent questions, concerns, and public comments raised by members of our community. We recognize that these issues evoke strong emotions, and we believe it is important to address them with intention and transparency. The City Council expects and encourages civility and mutual respect in all interactions with law enforcement, whether that be city, county, or federal, both from law enforcement professionals operating within our community and from members of the public engaging with them. Conduct that undermines these values is inconsistent with the character of the Ranson community and the standards of leadership and respect this City Council seeks to uphold.

It is essential to recognize all municipalities in West Virginia are governed by state law which requires municipal law enforcement agencies to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement activities and expressly prohibits cities from adopting policies or ordinances that conflict with that requirement. The City is required to operate within those statutory obligations, and we do not have discretion to act outside of the law, even when there are differing perspectives across our community.

The City of Ranson does not participate in the federal immigration partnership program authorized under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allows state or local officers to act as federal immigration enforcement agents. City law enforcement officers are not deputized as federal immigration agents, and the City does not exercise independent authority to enforce federal immigration law beyond what is required under state and federal law.

The City's foremost responsibility remains the welfare and safety of all our community members. That responsibility is carried out consistent with federal and state law and with the constitutional protections afforded to every person.

Federal immigration enforcement activities are authorized by law but are also subject to constitutional limits. Those limits exist to protect individual rights and to guide the conduct of all law enforcement professionals operating within our community, including the following established protections:

- Fourth Amendment protections prohibit warrantless entry onto private property. Law enforcement officers, including immigration enforcement officers, may not enter homes or nonpublic areas of businesses without a valid judicial warrant or the consent of a person with lawful authority. Individuals may state “I do not consent to entry” or “I do not consent to a search.”
- Fifth Amendment protections include the right to remain silent. Individuals are not required to answer questions, sign documents, or make statements. If a person chooses to speak, they must do so truthfully.
- First Amendment protections and the Right to Record Act protect the right to observe and record law enforcement activities, including immigration enforcement, so long as recording does not interfere with official duties.
- Documentation requirements differ based on status. United States citizens are not required to carry proof of citizenship. Lawful permanent residents and certain other noncitizens over the age of eighteen are legally required to carry valid immigration documentation.

If individuals encounter immigration enforcement activity, remaining calm and composed helps promote the safety and dignity of everyone involved. Individuals are encouraged to follow lawful instructions provided by officers on the scene and to avoid actions that could escalate the situation. Approaching these situations with patience and restraint helps reduce risk and supports the wellbeing of the entire community.

If it is safe to do so, individuals may document the encounter or write down relevant details afterward. Anyone who believes their rights have been violated should contact qualified legal counsel to discuss appropriate and lawful options. Community members impacted by immigration enforcement can access further resources through the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#).

The City’s role is not to direct or control federal enforcement activity but to promote public safety, lawful conduct, and respect for constitutional rights within our community. The City intends to provide clarity to the public and to affirm the City’s expectations regarding lawful, professional, and respectful conduct by all who serve and engage within our community. We remain committed to transparency, lawful governance, and providing accurate information so community members can better understand their rights, responsibilities, and expectations under the law.