

## THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED ENTANGLEMENT ON IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

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**Recent policy proposals call for increased entanglement between immigration enforcement and state and local police, which undermines existing protections for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. This will reduce the likelihood of immigrant victims or witnesses reporting crimes and create unprecedented fear for immigrant families and communities. The following reports illustrate these problems.**

- If immigrants are afraid to call the police out of fear of deportation, they become more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and are driven further into the shadows. The LAPD reported that since the beginning of 2017, “sexual assaults reported by Latinos in Los Angeles have dropped 25%, and domestic violence reports by Latinos have decreased by 10% compared to the same period last year.”<sup>i</sup>
- The Houston Police Department reported that the number of Hispanics reporting rape is down 42.8% from last year. Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo stressed that government agencies should enforce immigration laws “in a manner that does not have a chilling effect on victims of violent crimes coming forward regardless of their immigration status.”<sup>ii</sup>
- The Denver City Attorney reported that her office had to dismiss four domestic violence prosecutions because the undocumented **victims were afraid to continue with their cases for fear of deportation.**<sup>iii</sup>
- King County Prosecutor Daniel Satterburg recently stated, “When victims of crime are afraid to trust police and the courts, the only winners are violent people.”<sup>iv</sup>
- Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the Police Executive Research Forum, expressed: The reason police chiefs are so concerned is that an **unreported domestic violence case can become a reported homicide if police are not alerted.** It’s only a few months since the national perspective has changed, but I think most police chiefs would agree that for those who have large immigrant communities, this will definitely make them reticent about interacting with the police if they’re involved with witnessing a crime or are a victim.<sup>v</sup>
- In Camden County, New Jersey, there has been a 6% decrease so far this year in service calls from communities composed of primarily undocumented individuals. Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson stated, “The fear is palpable, and it’s manifested in how the community has altered its behavior or, I should say, it’s altered its relationship with the police department in a reluctance to communicate with us.” Thomson further noted that people in these communities are not distinguishing among local, state and federal officers. “They’re going to look at all police in the same light.”<sup>vi</sup>

**For more reports on the impact of immigration policy on survivors, see: [2017 Advocate & Legal Service Survey](#)**

<sup>i</sup> Balsamo, Michael. “LAPD: Latinos report fewer sex crimes amid immigration fears.” *Associated Press*, 22 Mar. 2017, [www.apnews.com/b1fb6bf0d0264463a81f65faa50c59fb](http://www.apnews.com/b1fb6bf0d0264463a81f65faa50c59fb)

<sup>ii</sup> Lewis, Brooke A. “HPD chief announces decrease in Hispanics reporting rape and violent crimes compared to last year.” *Houston Chronicle*, 6 Apr. 2017, [www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/HPD-chief-announces-decrease-in-Hispanics-11053829.php](http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/HPD-chief-announces-decrease-in-Hispanics-11053829.php)

<sup>iii</sup> Stern, Mark J. “Bad for Undocumented Immigrants, a Gift to Domestic Abusers.” *Slate*, 8 Mar. 2017, [www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/jurisdiction/2017/03/denver\\_city\\_attorney\\_kristin\\_bronson\\_on\\_the\\_trump\\_immigration\\_crackdown.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisdiction/2017/03/denver_city_attorney_kristin_bronson_on_the_trump_immigration_crackdown.html)

<sup>iv</sup> Satterburg, Dan. “Crackdown on Immigrants Undermines Public Safety.” *The Seattle Times*, 24 Mar. 2017, [www.seattletimes.com/opinion/crackdown-on-immigrants-undermines-public-safety/](http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/crackdown-on-immigrants-undermines-public-safety/)

<sup>v</sup> Bever, Lindsey. “Hispanics ‘are going further into the shadows’ amid chilling immigration debate, police say.” *The Washington Post*, 12 May 2017, [www.wapo.st/2prEMRc?tid=ss\\_tw&utm\\_term=.bb4aa1b62d21](http://www.wapo.st/2prEMRc?tid=ss_tw&utm_term=.bb4aa1b62d21)

<sup>vi</sup> Id.