



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG CITY COUNCIL

HARRISONBURG CITY HALL  
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December 9, 2025

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Dear X,

We, the Harrisonburg City Council, write to you with deep concern over recent federal immigration law enforcement actions in Harrisonburg. We are concerned that federal immigration law enforcement is not conducting work in a manner that treats people whom they encounter with humanity and dignity. We receive frequent questions from our constituents and neighbors about this conduct, and we believe it is our responsibility as their representatives to make sure the people of this diverse, thoughtful City have their questions answered and their voices heard.

Harrisonburg prides itself on being a caring community, one that has been a place of solace and new beginnings for refugees, asylees, and immigrants. This culture is part of our character and our community identity. A core tenet of our Council Vision for the future is that we are a "City for All". That tenet calls for us to ensure Harrisonburg is a place where all people feel safe, valued, and have abundant opportunity.

We have been alarmed to hear and see that the conduct of some federal immigration law enforcement officers in Harrisonburg does not meet the high standards we expect from our own Police Department. During detention activities, federal law enforcement has demonstrated no regard for ensuring that minors are not left unattended or connected with their next of kin, preventing vehicles from being abandoned in the streets, conducting traffic stops in safe locations, providing interpretation services, and obtaining medical histories and vital medications from detainees' families. This conduct does not align with our community values, is inhumane, and jeopardizes community safety.

With this context in mind, we ask our federal and state elected leadership to convene a statewide forum of local leaders to discuss the impact of current immigration enforcement on residents. While this forum is being planned, we seek answers to the following pressing questions:

- What policies are in place to ensure appropriate treatment of the public by officers involved in immigration enforcement?
- When a parent or guardian is detained, who assumes custody of minors, how are next of kin contacted, and who maintains stewardship for personal property of the detained?
- What review process exists for interactions involving the use-of-force?
- What mechanism exists to report conduct by a federal or state law enforcement officer that is unprofessional, inhumane, or unsafe? If there is none, we call on the Commonwealth to create a multilingual, online portal for residents to report such conduct.

We are also concerned residents are avoiding seeking justice and lifesaving medical care out of fear. To that end, we support restoring the prior federal guidance and advancing legislation that prohibits immigration enforcement in sensitive locations, such as courthouses, hospitals, schools, and places of worship except in the most narrow and urgent circumstances. Without these safeguards, there is a risk of undermining criminal prosecutions and public safety.

As one of our elected representatives, we implore you to provide our community members with answers to these questions and to exercise your oversight authority to confirm federal immigration law enforcement and collaborating state agencies adhere to high standards of conduct and treat all people in our community with dignity and humanity.

Respectfully,