



Yuma County Sheriff's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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Lack of Federal Prosecution Impacting Yuma County Jail

Location of Incident: Yuma County

In October 2014, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office began tracking a disturbing trend of illegal immigrants apprehended by Federal agents who were committing crimes which the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona (AUSA) has repeatedly refused to prosecute. Those crimes were primarily connected to drug smuggling; however, a new trend of identity theft by illegal immigrants has been on the rise.

Since October 2014, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) has incarcerated over 150 criminals apprehended by Federal agents at a cost in excess of \$980,000 to the local tax payer. In each of these cases, the AUSA refused to prosecute these criminals for federal crimes and instead shifted the burden to the local community. If the YCSO did not step in to enforce state law, these criminals would have been released without being charged for their offenses.

Recently, a new trend of identity theft has been discovered where illegal immigrants are using fraudulently obtained identification of otherwise legal residents and citizens in an attempt to sneak past established border security checkpoints. In the last week alone, thirteen (13) illegal immigrants have been arrested by U.S. Border Patrol Agents after they fraudulently produced passports and other identification which did not belong to them. Again, rather than prosecuting these criminals, the AUSA has declined these cases and so the YCSO has been forced to assume the cases, otherwise there would have been no repercussions for the crimes they committed.

As previously stated, Sheriff Leon Wilmot remains committed to enforcing the laws of the State of Arizona. *"When the United States Attorney continuously refuses to prosecute crimes ranging from drug smuggling, to child pornography, it places a significant burden on local governments to pick up the cost of prosecuting and incarcerating these criminals who would prey on the citizens of this nation."*

Yuma County will continue to prosecute these criminals who otherwise would be allowed by the AUSA to be released into society with no repercussions for breaking the law; to allow this is inconceivable.

Information Released By: Alfonso Zavala, Public Information Officer