



ABSSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF INDIANS OF OKLAHOMA

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It has been brought to my attention that developments in the policies of the United States government have led to mass deportation efforts across the country, including Indian Country. This is a growing concern for our Members. AST has recently been informed that the federal government, in its attempt to deport undocumented migrants, has begun to approach, question and even detain Tribal Members in Oklahoma. It appears that these Tribal Members were accosted by officers using unconstitutional racial profiling techniques. To be clear, there is no reasonable basis, reasonable suspicion, or probable cause to restrict the liberties of Native Americans based on any of the following characteristics: skin color; hair color; eye color; lack of identification; etc. To be blunt, just because a Native American may resemble, superficially, a migrant from Central or South America, that does not mean that federal officers have the right to approach.

These prejudicial activities are being carried out by Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), but our Members should expect either: (1) cooperation from state and local law enforcement agencies with ICE; and/or (2) a complete adoption of these policies and procedures. I remain passionate and aggressive when it comes to the safety and well-being of AST Members. For that reason, I will use the remainder of this letter to explain your rights, as both a United States and AST citizen.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

It is unquestionably unconstitutional and illegal for any government officer and/or agent to stop you, detain you, or question you without either a reasonable suspicion or probable cause that you have committed some kind of crime. It is especially unconstitutional for an officer or agent to do so based solely on your physical appearance. However, if you do find yourself face-to-face with an ICE officer, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and others:

1. Ask the federal officer and/or agent *why* you are being stopped, questioned, or detained. If the officer or agent provides a legitimate reason, such as a traffic violation, please understand that this is a perfectly legitimate reason, if true, for an officer to approach and question you briefly. Other justifications for a stop may include, but will not be limited to: broken tail light; speeding; public intoxication; etc.
2. Do NOT get angry, do NOT get loud, and do NOT show any aggression towards the officer and/or agent. Be as courteous as possible and if pressed, inform the officer and/or agent of your Tribal Membership. If the officer believes you are acting aggressively, it may eventually provide him enough justification to further detain you.
3. Always carry at least one (1) form of identification, whether that be a State of Oklahoma Driver's License, your Tribal ID, your CDIB card; etc.
4. Do NOT consent to being questioned and do NOT consent to a search of your person, your vehicle, or your home. However, if the officer and/or agent has presented a valid Arrest or Search Warrant, you have no choice but to comply. Without a warrant, simply provide your name and tribal affiliation, but do not agree to answer any further questions.

5. If the officer and/or agent has approached you, questioned you, or detained you on AST Trust Land, you may request that the officer and/or agent contact the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Police Department, so that our own Tribal police officers may observe the interaction and ensure your safety.

This is an ongoing predicament for Indian Country, which will continue to evolve. Please, if you or someone you know has been forced to interact with a federal officer and/or agent regarding your citizenship, immediately contact my office or the offices of any other Executive Committee Members.

Thank you

Governor Johnson