



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 18, 2017

ICE Issues Detainer Request for Arson Suspect Held in Sonoma County Jail

The U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) has issued a detainer request on the Sonoma County Jail for Jesus Fabian Gonzalez, who was arrested on October 15 on suspicion of arson. The information that Gonzalez is on an ICE detainer request was given to *Breitbart News*, which broke the story, by Sergeant Spencer Crum of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.



The *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* reported on October 16 that Gonzalez was arrested after he was seen leaving a creek bed where a fire was burning. Three Sonoma County Probation officers who were patrolling the area because of ongoing fires in the region noticed Gonzalez leaving the area of the fire and called the Sheriff's Office. Gonzalez was wearing a trench coat and told officers he started the fire because he was cold, though the temperature was 78 degrees.

The *Sacramento Bee* reported on October 17 that Gonzales was scheduled to be arraigned that day on a single count of felony arson, and one count of failing to appear for a past court appearance.

He is being held at the Sonoma County jail in Santa Rosa in lieu of \$110,000 bail.

A spokeswoman for the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office declined to comment on Gonzalez's immigration status.

Sonoma County declared itself a "sanctuary county" in May 2014, but has still cooperated somewhat with ICE detainer requests. Therefore, it is not known how they will respond to the detainer for Gonzalez. Because the charge pending against him is a felony, he may be in the county's custody for some time, if found guilty of arson.

Under its sanctuary policy, Sonoma County cooperates with "ICE holds" only if the prisoner has been convicted of a felony that falls within the California TRUST Act. (Under the TRUST Act, immigrant crime victims and witnesses are able to come forward and cooperate with police without fear of deportation.)

A statement posted on the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office website explains their policy on immigration issues:

If a Sheriff's Office member suspects that an individual is unlawfully present in the United States, such a suspicion shall not, by itself, serve as the basis for contact, detention, or arrest. Absent a separate law enforcement reason, Sheriff's Office members shall not question such persons directly about their immigration status, nor telephone ICE while in the field to obtain such information....

The Sheriff's Office will work cooperatively with ICE and other federal law enforcement agencies to help locate known or suspected criminals and gang members. All other requests to conduct joint operations with ICE or other federal law enforcement agencies shall be referred to the Sheriff or designee for prior approval and to establish operational parameters.



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As a condition to working with ICE on a joint operation in the field, the Sheriff's Office shall require ICE to refrain from arresting or taking custody of persons solely based on a suspicion that they are unlawfully present in the country (i.e., civil immigration violations), or solely based on low level traffic violations (e.g., Vehicle Code § 12500). Under such condition, ICE must agree at the outset of a joint operation not to arrest persons for civil immigration violations unless the subject was identified as a target of the joint operation, or if probable cause exists to believe the subject has engaged in criminal activity.

Though Gonzalez is a suspect in only the single fire at Maxwell Farms Regional Park in Sonoma, authorities are regarding it with understandable seriousness in view of the Northern California wildfires that have killed at least 42 people and driven 22,000 people from their homes this year. A total of 7,980 fires have burned 1,046,995 acres. Many of these fires have been in Napa and Sonoma counties, in the heart of California's wine country. The Tubbs fire in those counties resulted in 22 fatalities, with more than 5,000 structures being destroyed this month.

The fact that ICE issued a detainer request for Gonzalez accentuates the concerns that many Californians and others have that illegal aliens in our midst are responsible for many crimes. An [article posted by The New American](#) in 2015 explored the question of whether San Francisco's sanctuary city law had contributed to the tragic murder of a woman named Kathryn Steinle, who was walking on San Francisco's Pier 14 with her father when she was gunned down by an illegal alien named Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez.

After Governor Jerry Brown [signed a bill into law](#) on October 5 to make California a sanctuary state, some wondered how this affected Sonoma County, which declared itself a sanctuary county in 2015. An article in the *Press Democrat* on October 5 cited local authorities who said that the state law "is expected to have limited impact in Sonoma County because of current restrictions already in place about cooperation with federal immigration agents."

The article, again citing local officials, said the biggest change will be to shield immigrants convicted of DUIs from immigration-related notices to federal authorities when they are set to be released from jail.

The report noted that the new law will do little to alter how police interact with immigrant communities in Sonoma County, as local police chiefs say their officers do not inquire about immigration status and do not assist in ICE operations.

The main impact of the legislation will be to give immigrant communities "peace of mind" that local law enforcement will not work with federal authorities to deport people, the article said, quoting Santa Rosa Police Chief Hank Schreeder.

Perhaps a reporter should have asked Schreeder if law-abiding citizens are also entitled to have the "peace of mind" that might come from knowing that aliens in our midst are being held accountable for entering our nation illegally.

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