

The Frederick News-Post

287(g) impact is not in my lane

Edward Burrell

December 4, 2019

As we all know, an audit is being conducted of the sheriff's office to determine the county's cost in funding the 287(g) immigration program.

It appears that the county has made a number of possible missteps to taint the audit's results.

(1) The county placed the audit implementation in the hands of the internal audit agency, whose track record since the days of the Board of County Commissioners has been perceived to help the county cover up mistakes rather than correct them.

(2) Many of the same staff for the county were involved with the county efforts to sell Montevue. Are we seeing more aiding and abetting in the 287(g) discussion?

(3) The county is simply recycling a current audit firm on the pre-selected list of the audit agency. Such a move again calls into question a conflict of interest and lack of transparency.

(4) The task order for audit defines costs as only incremental costs and fails to include many items such as facility costs for office space and equipment, etc., related to carrying out the duties of 287(g). They are ignoring that Frederick taxpayers are paying annual budgeted debt service on many of these facilities.

(5) Most importantly, there is no concern being expressed by the county beyond costs. There is no recognition of what the effect is on our residents, including our immigrant families. While our school system has implemented a number of excellent programs to help our immigrant families in their educational needs, the county has created a community environment of rejection and persecution under the direction by the sheriff's office while good elected officials seem to do nothing.

(6) A number of studies have been conducted by researchers in local colleges and universities and by groups such as the Cato Institute, which have pointed out that implementing the 287(g) has had no effect on crime rates. You would think that the county, as a part of their sworn duties, would demand such data before they continue 287(g). Instead they take what is verbally presented at face value by the program functionaries without question.

After several years of our new charter government, one would certainly expect to see a much more rigorous budget process and a more informed analysis and questioning of all county agencies by elected officials. In fact, the well-run agencies would likely welcome such an opportunity to display their programs for the public oversight.