



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 31st, 2017

Contact: Sam Singleton-Freeman, 414-469-9206, sfreeman@vdlf.org

Under Massive Community Pressure, Sheriff Clarke Resigns



The front of the February 13th Day without Latinxs, Immigrants & Refugees to Stop Sheriff Clarke. Photo Sue Ruggles

MILWAUKEE — Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke has resigned. Sheriff Clarke had made himself a mouthpiece for white supremacists by attacking the Black Lives Matter Movement and making bigoted statements against the Black, Latinx, Muslim, and LGBTQ residents of Milwaukee County he was sworn to protect. Recently, Clarke's moves to use the federal 287g program to give his deputies authority to racially profile and detain immigrant families for deportation had sparked two general strikes organized by Voces de la Frontera, a strike and march on February 13th joined by 50,000 immigrant workers and supporters, and a 30,000-strong march on May 1st.

"This is a victory for the people of Milwaukee County and the state of Wisconsin," said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera. "We stopped David Clarke from being appointed to the Trump Administration, and today we have driven him from office. The efforts of immigrant families and our coalition partners to hold Clarke accountable for his discriminatory abuses, for the torture, sexual abuse, and deaths at the hands of his guards in his jail, have won this victory. We demanded his resignation and today we have succeeded.

"We call on Governor Walker to appoint a sheriff that will not bring 287g to Milwaukee County and will stop honoring unconstitutional ICE detainer requests. We call on Walker to appoint a sheriff who will work respectfully with the community to transform a sheriff's department and county jail rife with human rights abuses. We urge the Governor to appoint a Sheriff who will respect the dignity and constitutional rights of all residents regardless of race or immigration status, who will build accountability and trust with law enforcement, and provide alternatives to mass incarceration with the goal of creating healthy and safe communities.

"Clarke saw the writing on the wall and knew he would be defeated in 2018. Regardless of whom Walker appoints, the people of Milwaukee County will hold whoever is the Sheriff accountable for the changes we want to see in the department, and in 2018 the voters will have the have the chance to elect a Sheriff that reflects the kind of community we want to build."

###