

Alexandria Gazette Packet

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Resist Complicity

To the Editor:

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued two official memos, dated Feb. 20, 2017, implementing the president's Executive Orders on internal enforcement and "border security." Here is a link to the DHS page with these materials, the Executive Orders, and other material: <https://www.dhs.gov/executive-orders-protecting-homeland>. The final interior enforcement memo says that DHS should "prioritize" any removable noncitizen who has been charged with any criminal offense or has "committed acts which constitute a chargeable criminal offense." It says DHS "no longer will exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement."

The time has come for us as a city, and for our elected and appointed leaders and our local press, to resist complicity in implementation of a perverse, counterproductive, and woefully discriminatory policy that will wreak havoc on the lives and fortunes of untold numbers of persons who have fled to this country for freedom, security and a better life. Our authorities should not engage in facilitating the deportation of persons who have done nothing to warrant their removal except having come here in the first place. If this means defying the federal government and suffering the consequences, so be it.

When the law becomes perverse, it is the obligation of responsible authorities, in the public as well as private realm, to say so and act accordingly. This is already happening in all manner of contexts and venues relative to the Trump administration's appalling policies. Our city and its political and civic leadership should join and take a leadership role in this debate. This is what we learned, is it not, from Martin Niemoller ("First they came for the socialists") and from Dr. King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

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