

GOP candidates rally support for ICE agreement

By ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Republicans railed against illegal immigrants Friday, Oct. 4, on the steps of Cape May County Superior Court as District 1 Senate candidate Michael Testa said he would volunteer his legal services pro bono on a complaint against the New Jersey attorney general's decision to prohibit sheriff's departments from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement officials.

The 287(g) program allows state and local law enforcement entities to enter into partnerships with ICE

and deputize their officers to act as immigration agents.

The Cape May County Sheriff's Office first entered the 287(g) program in 2017 under former Sheriff Gary Schaffer. Under the agreement with the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), suspects at the county jail are checked against a federal database not otherwise accessible to county law enforcement. Current Cape May County Sheriff Robert Nolan continued the 287(g) program.

In February, Nolan renewed the agreement with ICE without first consulting the state.

New Jersey Attorney General Gubir Grewal re-

viewed information from Nolan about the program's effectiveness. On Sept. 27, Grewal issued a directive to all state, county and local law enforcement agencies in New Jersey ending the use of 287(g) agreements.

The order revises the Immigrant Trust Directive that Grewal issued in November 2018, and terminates two 287(g) agreements, in Cape May and Monmouth counties.

Grewal made clear that the 287(g) agreements "undermine public trust without enhancing public safety," and that many of the benefits of those agreements "are already being achieved by the Immigrant Trust Directive."

In response, Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton vowed that the county would challenge Grewal's directive in court, claiming that Nolan was defending the law.

In July, the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously passed a resolution supporting Nolan's "commitment to upholding public safety in Cape May County" by renewing the 287(g) agreement.

At the rally, Thornton said the county has an obligation to protect its residents and visitors.

"We have over 10 million visitors that come into this county every year and I can tell you it's extremely important that we protect them as we protect all of you 94,000 residents," Thornton said.

He said even though Nolan could contact federal agencies such as the FBI and DEA about subjects incarcerated in Cape May County, his hands are tied when it comes to communicating with ICE.

"This is an outrage. It's outrageous to let that happen," Thornton said. "I know and so do you that when

these illegal aliens come in and they commit a felony in this county, don't think that they weren't committing felonies down in Mexico or wherever the hell they came from. They didn't come here all of a sudden and decided to become a criminal."

Thornton, an Air Force veteran, told veterans in the crowd they should be "outraged" the state took \$2 million from the state veterans fund "to give to illegal aliens to protect them."

In 2018, New Jersey allocated more than \$2.1 million to provide legal representation to those who are detained and facing deportation.

Thornton said Nolan asked Cape May County freeholders to file a complaint in federal court against Grewal.

Cape May County Counsel Jeffrey Lindsay and county GOP Chairman Marcus Karavan, who is also an attorney, will join Testa in filing the complaint, Thornton added.

"I've been against this illegal alien thing since 2012. Sheriff Schaffer in 2012 said we're not going to be a sanctuary county and I agree," Thornton said, adding that Congress failed to stop undocumented immigration. "They leave us here being endangered and threatened by illegal aliens. President Trump, come and help us."

Testa said the rally's purpose was to support Nolan.

"He's (Nolan) one of two sheriffs in the entire state who's willing to take a stand against this radical leftist, socialist governor and attorney general that he has, who want to violate the law," Testa said. "As Republicans, what do we stand for? The rule of law. The rule of law binds us all no matter race, no matter color, creed, no matter religion. We believe in the Constitution of the United States. We believe in the New Jersey Constitution and all of the laws therein. Unfortunately, this radical

leftist socialist social justice warrior agenda coming out of Trenton sees the rule of law the constitutions as obstacles. They don't see them as guideposts."

Testa called out the incumbent District 1 Democratic legislators Sen. Bob Andrzejczak and Assemblymen Bruce Land and Matthew Milam, stating they're "reactive" and not "proactive" on important issues.

"Their reaction is only words. They're not taking action in Legislative District 1. What are they doing? They issue a press release. They're not here," Testa said. "They could be here to support Sheriff Nolan in a bipartisan way. They're not here. What do you get from them? Crickets. That's all you get. That's all you'll ever get."

Testa lambasted Gov. Phil Murphy as "radical" for taking money from veterans "to give to illegal aliens for a college education."

"I'm so proud to donate my time pro bono to this cause because Cape May County deserves better," Testa said.

He said a Mexican national who was arrested for allegedly raping an underage girl in August was released from jail in Cumberland County despite requests he be held until federal agents could take him into custody. According to reports, a state judge denied a county prosecution motion to detain the subject until his trial. Records indicate the subject was arrested six years ago in Cumberland County, but the case was resolved in municipal court.

"This is what we're doing? We're releasing dangerous criminals who are wanted by ICE onto our streets?" Testa said. "This is insane. ... Does everybody remember the American Express commercial 'membership has its privileges'? Citizenship should come with privileges."

Nolan said the legal team will "put together a lawsuit that'll have their head spinning because we're going to point out the things that are wrong."

Nolan noted other states with lax or lenient immigration policies and sanctuary cities and counties, where local officials don't fully comply with federal immigration laws.

"California has been sitting there with their hands up their butt. ... We're not against the people who come to this great country to make a better life for themselves. What we are against is when they come over here illegally and instead of trying to take a path to citizenship they create more crime," Nolan said.

Under the county's agreement with ICE, suspects at the county jail are checked against a federal database currently not accessible to county law enforcement. If a subject is found to be undocumented, ICE is notified.

"It's a no-brainer. I call ICE and tell them to come and get them," Nolan said, adding three of his officers went through extensive training and were sworn in as ICE deputies under the 287(g) program.

"By the time the ICE workers get in the next day, they know that we've got a couple of scoundrels down in Cape May. They can communicate with us and we tell them when they're getting out, but I still have restrictions on how long I can keep them," Nolan said. "You realize that this governor and attorney general have limited the time I can keep those people when we identify them to 11:59 at night because I'm not allowed to keep them to the next day. ... Since when did the cops become the bad guys? Law enforcement is the one thing that keeps us from anarchy."

Nolan said the complaint against Grewal's decision will be filed in federal court next week and immediately after that an injunction will be filed "to stop the craziness that's coming down from the attorney general."

Nolan said he isn't running in the Nov. 5 general election this year, but the rally speakers boosted current Republican campaigns. Thornton is running for re-election on the freeholder board with incumbent E. Marie Hayes. Testa was joined by Republican Assembly candidates Antwan McClellan and Erik Simonsen.

McClellan, an Ocean City councilman, said he has worked in the Sheriff's Department for three years and considers Nolan a "friend."

"He cares about this county more than anybody else. He wants to make sure that we're safe around here," McClellan said. "We need to let them know in Trenton that Cape May County's not going to be played with."

Simonsen, the mayor of Lower Township, called it a "serious issue" and said Nolan needs the public's support.

"It doesn't get any more serious than this. It's ridiculous that we have to fight for our right to follow the law," Simonsen said.

TIDES : Oct. 9-16, 2019

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
9	5:54	6:06	11:38	
10	6:36	6:48	12:14	12:24
11	7:14	7:27	12:52	1:05
12	7:50	8:04	1:26	1:44
13	8:25	8:40	1:59	2:22
14	8:58	9:15	2:31	2:59
15	9:31	9:49	3:02	3:37
16	10:04	10:25	3:34	4:15

MOON PHASES

Full moon, Oct. 13 • last quarter, Oct. 21

Cape May Star & Wave

CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (ISSN 519-020)
Volume 165 Number 40

Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc.,
801 Asbury Ave., #310, Ocean City, N.J. 08226

Published Weekly (52 times a year)

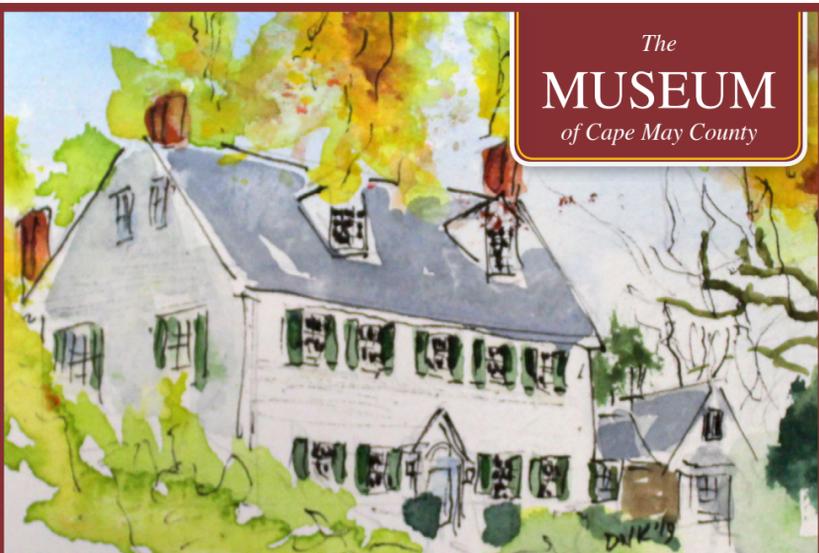
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Periodical Postage at Cape May Court House, N.J. and additional mailing offices.

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Customers should **REFRAIN**
from doing laundry.

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**MYRTLE AVENUE-CENTRAL AVENUE
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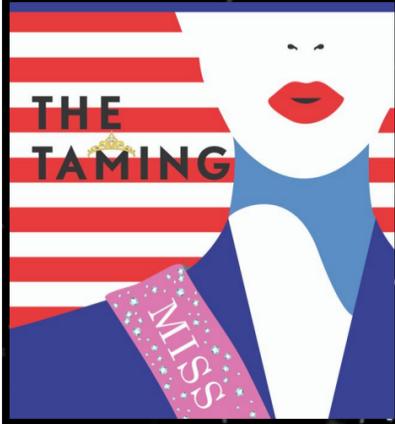
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SEPT 25-NOV 1

WED-SAT | 7:30 PM

SAT & SUN | 3:00 PM

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AT 7:30 PM

