

**Chief Chris Magnus (Tucson, AZ) and Chief Art Acevedo (Houston, TX) provided testimonies to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration on December 12, 2018 for a hearing entitled “Narcos: Transnational Cartels and Border Security.” See below for their written testimonies.**

### **Chief Chris Magnus (Tucson, AZ)**

Chairman Cornyn, Ranking Member Durbin, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration today and to testify on these important issues.

I’m Chris Magnus, the police chief for the City of Tucson, Arizona. I’ve been in policing for 40 years, including 20 years as a police chief. Prior to my current appointment, I served as police chief in Richmond, California and Fargo, North Dakota. Much of my policing career was in Lansing, Michigan. For several years while I was with the Lansing Police Department, I was assigned as a detective with a regional narcotics enforcement squad. This team was a collaborative initiative involving federal, state, and local officers that focused on mid and higher level narcotics dealers.

I have a Master’s degree in Labor Relations and a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University. I also received an Associate’s degree in Business and certification as a Paramedic from Lansing Community College. I’ve attended the “Senior Executives in State & Local Government” program at the Harvard Kennedy School and the FBI’s National Executive Institute program. I currently sit on the Board of Directors for the Police Executive Research Forum.

As the police chief of a large (255 square mile), diverse community located close to the border with Mexico, I understand the need for effective border security. I’ve seen how transnational criminal organizations prey on immigrant communities as they traffic drugs and people into the U.S., just as they smuggle guns and bulk cash into Mexico.

There’s no simple solution for addressing these problems. Improving border security and achieving community safety requires effective cooperation and trust – between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies – but just as critically between immigrant communities and those public safety officers who serve them.

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Because that cooperation and trust serves as the foundation for effective policing, I have made it a priority throughout my career to work towards strengthening ties between police officers and the communities they serve. Indeed, to further this goal, I've remained steadfast in my commitment to improving services for victims of domestic and sexual violence, reaching out to immigrant and refugee communities, and supporting youth programs such as Police Activities Leagues and Boys and Girls Clubs. Drawing on the lessons learned through these experiences, I have testified before the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing on best practice models of community policing. I have also worked extensively with the Department of Justice to provide technical support and implement policing best practices in cities across the country.

### The Importance of Cooperation

As police chief of Tucson, I appreciate the unique threat posed by transnational criminal organizations. Like other law enforcement agencies, the Tucson Police Department works collaboratively with federal, state, and local authorities to go after drug cartels, human traffickers, money launderers, gun traffickers, and transnational gangs. Such cooperation is necessary to combat these threats and the provision of federal resources to localities, including federal grant funding, helps local law enforcement keep our communities safer.

Earlier this year, our department was one of several local law enforcement agencies that took part in Operation Southern Star VII, partnering with the Marshals Service; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)-Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO); and ICE-Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to arrest 53 wanted sex offenders, violent offenders, gang members and those with outstanding felony warrants.

Previously, in 2016, we were one of several local law enforcement agencies taking part in a multiagency operation that included ICE-ERO, ICE-HSI, and the Drug Enforcement Administration to target and interrupt a Tucson-based heroin trafficking ring. The operation resulted in 16 suspects being brought into custody. In these instances and many others, we have seen the benefit of partnering with other federal, state, and local law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies at all levels have a role to play in stopping cartels from moving narcotics and human trafficking victims into the United States. At the same time, the flow of firearms and bulk cash from the United States into Mexico poses major problems for the U.S. and Mexico alike. Cooperation between federal, state, and local law enforcement is essential to undermining transnational criminal organizations, which improves public safety on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

***To view complete written testimony, click [here](#).***

**Chief Art Acevedo (Houston, TX)**

Chairmain Cornyn, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Subcommittee, let me start by saying that I appreciate this opportunity to provide you with written testimony. I regret I will not be able to testify in person on this critical issue of transnational cartels and border security, but due to schedule conflicts, I was unable to attend the hearing.

By way of introduction, I am Art Acevedo, Chief of Police for the Houston Police Department. I have spent over 32 years in law enforcement, working my way up through the ranks of the California Highway Patrol to Chief of the California Highway Patrol in 2005. I served nine years as Chief of the Austin, Texas Police Department before being selected to lead the Houston Police Department in 2016. Along the way, I have held various positions with the International Association of the Chiefs of Police and I am currently the president-elect for the Major Cities Chiefs Association, an organization that represents Chiefs and Sheriffs of the sixty-nine largest law enforcement agencies in the United States and the ten largest agencies in Canada.

All the law enforcement agencies that I have had the honor of working for are within states that border Mexico. I have spent the majority of my law enforcement career working in large, diverse metropolitan areas, the last two years with the City of Houston, which according to the Kinder Institute is the most diverse big city in the nation.

Houston's population has increased tremendously over the past 18 years, increasing from 1.95 million in 2000 to an estimated 2.3 million today. A large portion of Houston's new residents are immigrants and an estimated 1.1 million residents in the greater Houston Metropolitan region were born outside of the United States, which is roughly 21% of the population. Additionally, it is estimated that at least 145 languages are spoken in the city.

**MAINTAINING TRUST BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

The diversity in race, religion and ethnicity found in Houston is also found in many of the other large urban areas in the United States. Law enforcement agencies representing these diverse communities must work diligently to make their communities safe. One of the requirements for any successful law enforcement agency working in a diverse democratic

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environment is to gain the trust and support of the entire community. As noted above, our communities are comprised of many first generation immigrants, both documented and undocumented. If these communities fear the police, then they will not report crimes, come forward as witnesses, or provide valuable information about criminal activity.

The cartels that flood our streets with drugs and subjugate persons to human trafficking use our local street gangs to complete their deadly and destructive criminal activity. In order for law enforcement to disrupt and dismantle the gangs that terrorize our neighborhoods and the drug cartels that make their profits through human misery, we must have information that is known or witnessed by the people that live in our communities. Local enforcement uses the information we gain from our community outreach to intervene and suppress the criminal activity at the local level. In conjunction with our federal law enforcement partners, through federal task forces and other cooperative efforts, we then use that information to move up the ladder to dismantle the drug cartels that supply the drugs and human victims.

During my 32-year career in law enforcement, I have seen and been part of the progression as we learned and continue to evolve with respect to our role within the communities we serve. From my perspective, relational policing is the key to representing our residents and being tough on crime. I am a firm believer in transparency and trust. If we are to be tough on crime, we must not forget that it begins with the trust and cooperation of our communities.

I make the above points to emphasize that if we want to be effective and work to disrupt the drug cartels, we cannot afford to alienate broad spectrums of our community. Asking local law enforcement officers to become involved in immigration enforcement is counterproductive. It breeds fear and distrust in the immigrant community, thus making law enforcement less effective at attacking violent street crime and consequently less effective at going after the drug cartels. When a person is involved in illegal activity, we use all the resources available, including working with federal law enforcement agencies that have the authority and responsibility to enforcement immigration laws.

***To view complete written testimony, click [here](#).***

