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'What's right, what's moral, what's legal'

Sheriff Kimbrough addresses ICE agreement during community forum

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

To mark his first 100 days in office, on Monday, March 25, Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough held an open forum with the residents of Forsyth County to discuss some of the changes he's made since taking the oath of office and to address any concerns the residents may have.

A native of Winston-Salem with more than 30 years of experience in law enforcement and after defeating longtime incumbent Bill Schatzman in the general election, Kimbrough was sworn in as the first African-American sheriff in Forsyth County. After taking the oath from Superior Court Judge Todd Burke, Kimbrough promised voters that while he's in office, everyone in Forsyth County would have a voice within the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office.

diversity within the department, training, gun permits, guns in schools, the local SRO (School Resource Officer) Program, or the budget, Kimbrough and his staff addressed every question.

"I think as an elected official, there's an obligation to the people that vote you in that we come before you and give you the chance to put us to the test and ask difficult questions," said Kimbrough. "...You have the right to know what's going on in your sheriff's office. We have an obligation to report back to you."

A large portion of the crowd during the forum were there to ask questions about the Forsyth-ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement) jail agreement, which allows U.S. Marshals to use the Forsyth County Detention Center to detain immigrants. Before the forum,



Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough shares his thoughts on the agreement with ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement, that allows U.S. Marshals to use the Forsyth County Detention Center during a recent community forum.



Before the community forum hosted by the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, members of Siembra NC held a press conference asking Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough to 'uncheck box 18'.

During an interview with The Chronicle, Kimbrough said, "Everybody in this community we believe should have a voice. We want to serve all the community - the north, the south, the east, and the west. We believe that it's going to take a village approach of law enforcement."

Staying true to his word, during the forum Kimbrough didn't shy away from any of the concerns raised by residents. It did not matter if it was

members of Siembra NC, a local grassroots Latinx organization that works to defend their communities from ICE detention and other forms of discrimination and exploitation, held a press conference to ask Kimbrough to 'uncheck box 18' of the U.S. Marshals Service agreement that gives ICE access to the jail.

"We are asking Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough to simply change the U.S. Marshals' jail agreement that is currently standing," said Laura Garduño of Siembra NC during the press conference.

"All he needs to do is uncheck the box on number 18. We're asking him to change it so our immigrant families can stop living under the imminent threat of being separated by Immigration Customs Enforcement."

Sheriff Kimbrough has been on record several times stating that he plans to withdraw from the current agreement with the U.S. Marshals Service, but the contract currently in place, which was signed by Schatzman, doesn't end until next month.

He said on April 30 when the contract is up for renewal, his team will have the power to make a decision on the future of the agreement, but until then he has to follow the contract.

"...There are contractual agreements that I have to respect because I can't cost the county money based on what I feel or what I think. My decisions are based on what is right, what is moral, and what is legal," continued Kimbrough. "...We're negotiating with the U.S.

Marshals Service because what you have to realize is ICE isn't only immigration, ICE handles human trafficking, guns, and a whole slew of things."

Kimbrough said when he sits down to restructure the contract, he plans to make sure they aren't housing individuals who have immigration violations. He noted since making his views on the Forsyth ICE-Jail Agreement public earlier this year, the sheriff's office has not honored the I-203 form that orders the detainment of immigrants.

He said, "...I'm aware of the box. Believe me, you have my support. I'm going to do what's right, what's moral, and what's legal."

On a lighter note, several residents in attendance took the time to

thank Sheriff Kimbrough for his commitment to the citizens of Forsyth County. Community activist Yusef Suggs congratulated Kimbrough on his victory and thanked him for his stance against ICE.

When discussing the changes within the FCSO, Sergeant W. Owens, who is also a native of Winston-Salem, said Kimbrough has brought a positive attitude to the sheriff's office that wasn't there before.

"...The same way he was here today is the same way he is with us. He's very welcoming, very open, and very transparent," said Sgt. Owens. "He has brought a positive attitude to the sheriff's office. He's really changing the atmosphere."



During a community forum at the Central Library on Monday, March 26 Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough addressed several concerns from residents. Kimbrough said the forum is just the first of several forums his office plans to hold throughout the year.

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