

January 20, 2012

The Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable David Aguilar  
Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano and Commissioner Aguilar:

We are writing as the Forks Human Rights Group to express our great concern for the continued and increasingly questionable and illegal behavior of the US Border Patrol in our town of Forks, WA. We ask that you take action and investigate and put an end to unlawful practices. Forks is a small town of 3,500 people on the northwest tip of the Olympic Peninsula, in Washington State.

We, the Forks Human Rights Group, are a community based group in Forks, WA that works to ensure that the human rights of all of our community members are respected and honored. We work through the integration of documentation, education and advocacy. We have been documenting human rights violations by Border Patrol agents in our community for over three years. We have been meeting with the local Port Angeles office of Border Patrol since March 2011 and in October 2011 we met with and started communication with the Blaine Sector office. Formal complaints have been filed with the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Although the complaints were filed six months to one year ago, we have heard no formal response to any of our complaints. In addition we have met with and had regular dialogue with the offices of our WA state senators and representatives.

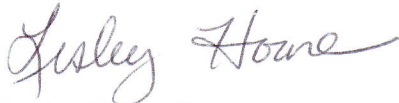
We have seen no change to date. The use of illegal and intimidating tactics by the local Border Patrol agents with our immigrant population as well as our Native American and Latino community members continues to be common practice. We are encouraged by the Department of Homeland Security's response to the Department of Justice's investigation of Sheriff Arpaio and Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. This signals to us that DHS would not approve of the similar techniques and practices being used by their agents in our town and surrounding forests. The overwhelming majority of Border Patrol apprehensions of our community members come through traffic stops for minor infractions such as driving 5 miles over the speed limit or having a light out (frequently reasons for the traffic stops are not even provided), or by agents waiting for community members of color to come out of the woods before, during or after work (where people harvest forest products). More recently, they have been using "alien smuggling and harboring" as a pretext to stop, harass, and at times detain innocent community members.

The Border Patrol has refused a Freedom of Information Act requested by the Peninsula Daily News for arrest totals for the North Olympic Peninsula and the identities of those arrested, citing national security concerns. Although we have heard some response from senators and representatives at the

state level, they have not been able to affect any change. We have had no meaningful response from our local Port Angeles office or the Blaine Sector office. Please review the information that we have included with this letter: three past letters to our Senators and Representatives, analyses of Border Patrol activity in our town, list of media regarding Border Patrol in our area, and several letters from community members.

We strongly urge you to step in and take action to investigate the practices of the Border Patrol in our town. We appreciate your serious consideration of this request and look forward to hearing back from you. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. You may reach our group by contacting the signatory below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Hoare".

Lesley Hoare for  
Forks Human Rights Group  
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360-780-2009