



**PIMA COUNTY DEMOCRATS CHALLENGE SHERIFF MARK NAPIER ON IMMIGRATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 5, 2019- Pima County Sheriff Mark Napier must use his national media platform to tell the rest of the country that the only crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border is a humanitarian crisis, Pima County Democratic Party Executive Committee members told him during a contentious exchange on Monday night.

Napier, head law-enforcement officer of the county with the longest stretch of southern border, had solicited time to address the committee at its monthly meeting, and was offered 10 minutes. He touted his department's higher salaries, Pima County's lower crime statistics, and his personal ambition to serve one more term as sheriff. But several questioners said they weren't interested in what he had to say if he wouldn't condemn family separations at the border and work to reunite families.

"The only thing I care about right now is reuniting children with their parents," one committee member said. "We know you collaborated with the people who removed thousands of children from their families."

Another added: "If you have this national platform and you agree that there is a problem, you should be using that platform to say that there are children in my county who came here looking for asylum and were ripped away from their parents. and... something needs to be done about it. That's all we're asking you to do."

PCDP Chair Alison H. Jones said that granting Napier's request to speak was bound to be controversial, but that the board saw it as a chance to hold the sheriff accountable.

"While it is not usual business to allow a Republican elected official to the PCDP Executive Committee, this event provided an opportunity for committee members to be heard regarding the cruel and illegal immigration policies implemented under the current administration," Jones said. "Committee members made it clear to Sheriff Napier that these policies are not acceptable, and that Democrats are making it a priority to elect those who will end these cruel policies.

"We listened to Napier, and then we made sure that he listened to us. It was an opportunity for us to make our stance clear. And we made it very clear that until children are reunited with their parents, his message rang hollow. "

Napier said he uses his access to the national stage to help those who are not as informed as he is about border issues. But he stopped short of saying that he would use those outlets to characterize the border situation solely as a humanitarian crisis.

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