The Bell Police Department stands in solidarity with our community, especially those affected by federal immigration activity. We recognize the fear and anxiety these circumstances have caused, and we want to be clear: the Bell Police Department does not, and will not, participate in federal immigration enforcement.

There is widespread misinformation about the City's authority to stop or interfere with federal operations. Immigration enforcement is conducted at the federal level and supersedes local jurisdiction. While the City and Police Department are legally prohibited from interfering with federal law enforcement activities, we remain fully committed to protecting the safety and well-being of everyone in our community.

Out of concern for public safety, we will always respond to any law enforcement operations taking place in the City of Bell. Residents are encouraged to notify the Bell Police Department if you see any law enforcement activity occurring in our community so that we can respond promptly. Federal agents use tactics that differ from local policing methods, and we understand this has caused distress among residents. When notified, we will respond to the scene, verify agency credentials, and ensure operations are conducted in an official capacity. Our role is to maintain safety, ensure fair treatment, preserve order, and protect the public's right to peacefully and lawfully express their views.

Although we continue to request advance notice of federal operations, the reality is that federal authorities do not inform the City before immigration enforcement activity. This is why community communication is essential.

We encourage residents to know their rights and to express their right to free speech in a peaceful and lawful manner. The City distributes and has available for the public, "Know You Rights" red cards with factual information to help residents stay informed and prepared. The City will continue to host Know Your Rights Workshops for the community. For more information, please visit www.cityofbell.gov.

Law enforcement situations are often fluid and require rapid decision-making. While we strive to make the best decisions possible based on available information, our actions are always guided by public safety. If residents are concerned about the approach or actions of the Bell Police Department, we encourage them to engage in open dialogue with us so that we can address their issues, and evaluate and improve our response to future incidents when needed. Maintaining trust requires honest, ongoing dialogue, and we are committed to continuous communication with our community to strengthen that trust and improve our service.

While we cannot interfere with federal law enforcement operations, we will be present to ensure public safety. We take seriously our oath to protect and serve every resident of the City of Bell.

*Chief of Police Damian Velasco*