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[00:00:11] **Speaker 1** We'll continue our coverage of that race next week, including more on the candidates and issues facing Wisconsin's education system. As deportations escalate across the country, the state assembly this week passed a bill that would require county sheriffs to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. The bill would require that sheriffs request proof of legal presence in the US from people held in a county on a felony charge. and report them to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. It would also require sheriffs to comply with federal detainer warrants, that is holding an unauthorized person jailed on a criminal offense for ICE. Failure to comply would result in the loss of 15% of a county's shared revenue payments. If the bill makes it to the governor's desk, he says he will veto it. The Kewanee County Sheriff has weighed in on the immigration issue. calling for keeping his community safe, while at the same time calling for compassion. Sheriff Matt Joske joins us now, and Sheriff, thanks very much for being here.

[00:01:21] **Speaker 2** Thank you for having me.

[00:01:23] **Speaker 1** So you have said that you of course are committed to protecting your community by enforcing the laws, but you see the potential for quote, untold levels of human suffering due to the rigid application of our laws. Does this bill strike you as that rigid application of laws?

[00:01:43] **Speaker 2** I know this really doesn't because you have to remember what we're talking about here again is that criminal activity Um, so that's the separation there when we talk about people that are in our communities That are committing crimes. I think it's I think it's incumbent on us, right? It's it's absolutely our responsibility as law enforcement officials to collaborate and cooperate at all levels. We've been doing this for decades It's unfortunate that it's it's reached this level. I think of emotion and and feeling But we have to get back to basics that we always have and always will. collaborate and cooperate with those state and federal entities that partner with us to keep our community safe.

[00:02:18] **Speaker 1** So what would in your mind cause human suffering as a result of immigration rules and laws?

[00:02:26] **Speaker 2** I think when we talk about the next phase, what we're seeing happen now with this focus on those criminal elements in our country, again, I commend it, I'm grateful for it because that is in essence keeping our community safe. But it's when we get to this next phase, when we start talking about those individuals, these families, they're here. how do we treat them? And I think you're referring to an article I wrote where we have to make sure that we don't put everything into one group, that we treat those here for whatever reason that they're here, but they're raising their children, working jobs, really trying to be contributing members of our society. I cannot imagine the reality we treat them the same as the criminal elements. So that's where I make a separation in how we process it. And I hope that we as a country, I think we are, I think we're smart enough. I think we have the capability. to separate this out and do the right thing when it comes to the families, to the men and women that are here honestly trying to make this country a better place.

[00:03:21] **Speaker 1** So have you seen ICE in your community removing law-abiding, if unauthorized, immigrants?

[00:03:28] **Speaker 2** Over the decades, again, this is nothing new. Over the decades, especially with the onset of our large agricultural farms, we have had ice in our community. We have not taken active role in their operations. There's always a courtesy where they make us aware of their presence when they are engaged in their operations. But all these years, it's just been a matter of awareness, situational awareness and support in the event that they would need us.

[00:03:52] **Speaker 1** Now I read that your officers do not ask for the status of people pulled over in a traffic stop or report people in the community without legal authorization to be in the U.S. to ICE. Why not?

[00:04:07] **Speaker 2** Because at this point, there's really no purpose to it. I don't know where that information would be relevant. Again, it's not our role to enforce immigration laws. Now, mind you, when we do have somebody, whether it's on a traffic stop or if they're involved in a complaint, no different than anyone else in the community, we, of course, we do collect names and information as any good law enforcement agency would. But as far as specifically asking for or targeting that population, again, there's really no merit to it.

[00:04:33] **Speaker 1** Have you gotten any response to your persuasion position on this from other law enforcement across the state?

[00:04:43] **Speaker 2** I think that overall, I would think that law enforcement were very like-minded. Again, our priority is keeping our community safe. But we also understand the need for compassion, for humanity, to look at this at a deeper sense and not just take everything as sort of a one size fits all approach. So I do think there's a commonality across the state.

[00:05:02] **Speaker 1** You've advocated also, however, without success for the creation of a driver's card program in the state of Wisconsin. Why is that?

[00:05:12] **Speaker 2** So that was over a decade ago, and it was a moment in time where the climate, I think, had lent itself to maybe that conversation. But unfortunately, just as in today's conversations. it automatically goes to a sense of entitlement or what is that, granting them. And I think from our perspective over a decade ago, it was about public safety. A mechanism by which folks could be trained to drive and making sure that they have the correct requirements as you and I do to operate on our roads, the ability to have auto insurance. So if and when they're involved in auto accidents. And then actually additional criteria could have been placed on it in regards to their obligation in pursuing citizenship. Now, had that been done over a decade ago, we might be looking at an entirely different landscape here in the state of Wisconsin. But again, unfortunately, a lot of times, emotion and fear takes the day and it never went anywhere. So I don't envision in today's climate. that that would ever be something that we could resurrect.

[00:06:07] **Speaker 1** Well, Sheriff Matt Jostke from Kiwani County, we really appreciate your time today, thank you.

[00:06:13] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:06:21] **Speaker 1** You are great, sir, thank you. How long have you been sheriff?

[00:06:27] **Speaker 2** Oh, I'm in my fifth term. So I've been sheriff, I'm in my 18th year. Law enforcement, gosh, it's gotta be like 32 years. So yeah, I've been doing this for a bit.

[00:06:35] **Speaker 1** Yeah, were you, did you always serve in Kiwani County or were you elsewhere?

[00:06:41] **Speaker 2** I started my career actually in the city of Two Rivers and then came back to the city of Keewanee and then literally went from a back shift officer to being the sheriff. Ran for office in 2006, I got elected. I literally went from a New Year's Eve working a night shift to New Year's Day becoming the sheriff. So I had a lot of interesting stories and learning experiences along the way.

[00:07:03] **Speaker 1** Great, I bet. Well, thank you. It was really nice to meet with you.

[00:07:07] **Speaker 2** Oh, it was wonderful, let me know if I can ever help in the future.

[00:07:09] **Speaker 1** Thank you, sir.

[00:07:12] **Speaker 2** Take care.