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as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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Selective law enforcement

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What do you do with a county sheriff who treats criminals like criminals, who enforces all the laws, not just the politically correct ones?

Simple. You claim racism, civil rights violations, and contact the Justice Department. His critics hoped it would seek to remove him from office. Instead, Loretta King, acting assistant attorney general in charge of the investigation, said that if the investigation uncovers violations, her office "will provide recommendations on ways to improve practices and procedures."

First elected in 1992 and easily re-elected four times, Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, Arizona is a unique law enforcement officer, living with constant lawsuits and attacks from organizations like the ACLU.

His response to news of the Justice Department investigation? It was not the defiance you might expect. He said, "If they want to come down, we will cooperate with them. If there's something to learn from them, we will."

I suspect Sheriff Arpaio also surprises his critics with some of the excellent community programs he oversees; programs that get little media attention. He started bicycle registration, created block watches, started child identification and fingerprinting, started operation identification which marks valuables, started operation notification which identifies business owners who should be notified in an emergency, created

Project Lifeline which provides free cell phones to domestic violence victims, operates the S.T.A.R.S. program which is the "Sheriffs Teaching Abuse Resistance to Students", and sponsors a summer camp for kids.

But what has he done over the years to earn the ire of his critics? One of his first and continuing controversies is his famous tent city where he houses criminals in military style tents and a military style environment. His response to charges that this violates the inmates human rights? He unapologetically says, "Soldiers are living in tents and they didn't commit any crimes."

He continues undeterred, in 1995 he started the old-fashioned chain gangs for male inmates and in 1996 added volunteer chain gangs for female inmates. He then started volunteer all-juvenile chain gangs, allowing the inmates to earn high school credits toward graduation. Is this a man violating human rights or a man admirably promoting human rights?

He has also banned smoking, coffee, pornographic materials, movies, and unrestricted television in his jails. Is this violating the inmates civil rights or is this just common sense?

The final insult to his critics is his decision to enforce federal law allowing local law enforcement to arrest illegal aliens, saying, "If you come here... (instead of) a free ride back to Mexico (you will get) a free ride to my jail."

To carry out this task, he launched a hotline people can call with tips about illegal aliens in Maricopa County. He added "moving billboards" on trucks and vans with the hotline number. Although the signs only discuss "illegal immigration and trafficking," his critics claim this is racist.

How successful is Arpaio's pursuit of illegal aliens? Besides arresting 2300 illegal aliens, he has 60 ICE trained detention officers who conducted 106,000 investigations since April, 2007. The results? They discovered 16,000 illegal alien inmates, representing an incredible third of all such inmates in the United States. Moreover, 20% of all his inmates are illegal aliens and of those, 70% were arrested for felony crimes.

Is this man a racist who ignores human and civil rights? Or is this a man willing to do his job, regardless of the price to pay? Maybe it is the Sheriff's critics who are racist, expecting him not to arrest any illegal aliens from Mexico.

Politicians tell us the situation with illegal aliens is unmanageable and we cannot deport them all. President Eisenhower in the 1950s proved that for each illegal alien arrested and deported, another ten self-deport. We can solve this problem. But the only way to solve the proposed impossible is to take it head on, just like Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

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