

Consul General of Mexico has warning about undocumented immigrants



Consul General of Mexico Carlos Gonzalez Gutierrez. (Photo: KVUE)

Jenni Lee, KVUE 9:01 PM. CST February 07, 2017

AUSTIN - The Mexican Consulate in downtown Austin is normally busy, but representatives have been seeing increased traffic over the last two weeks.

Consulate representatives tell KVUE they are serving up to 250 people per day, up from an average of 150-200 they usually see. Consul General Carlos Gonzalez-Gutierrez said the increased traffic comes from fear and that fear stems from several sources.



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For example, despite untrue rumors about immigration raids at Austin area work sites and schools last week, the Consul General said, "Nevertheless, the rumors were very strong, they spread like fire through social media and people were scared."

Then there is President Donald Trump's travel ban on refugees from seven mostly Muslim countries. Mexico is not on the list, but Gonzalez-Gutierrez said that ban increases distrust of all foreigners.

"Everything that is foreign is kind of suspicious and that certainly affects all countries," explained Gonzalez-Gutierrez.

Such incidents have lead to unusual questions.

"Is the government able to take our homes our property just because we are undocumented?... I have never seen those types of concern as widespread as it is now," said Gonzalez-Gutierrez.

Add the sanctuary cities bill that Texas lawmakers are debating to the list, and Gonzalez-Gutierrez said that will only isolate undocumented immigrants even more.

"With the rhetoric that we hear, and with the bills that are being proposed in the state legislature, I think immigrants will end up being pushed further underground," the Consul General said.

He added that the current hostile climate will only lead to further distrust of police. That could ultimately mean fewer crimes reported, which is already an issue. And less help from the undocumented community when investigators need all the eyes and ears they can get to solve crimes.

As for President Trump's desire to build a wall and have Mexico pay for it, the Consul General said, "We have been very clear as a government to say that we don't consider that a friendly step."

Trump's announcement led to Mexico President Enrique Peña Nieto to cancel a scheduled meeting between the two leaders.

"I never thought I would even see in my lifetime a President of Mexico having to cancel a meeting with his counterpart in the United States," said the Consul General.

Gonzalez-Gutierrez said the relationship between the two countries is at stake.



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According to the Pew Research Center, fewer people from Mexico are moving to the U.S. From 1995 until 2014, the number has decreased.



Immigration from Mexico to U.S. Data from Pew Research Center. (Photo: KVUE)

The Pew Research Center also reports that as of 2014, there are 1.65 million undocumented immigrants in Texas.

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