



**DANE COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ISMAEL R. OZANNE**



PRESS RELEASE

Hard copies made available at event

Date: 01-15-2025

**DANE COUNTY LEADERS HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE
TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS -
DA'S OFFICE PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS**

Hello I'm Ismael Ozanne - your Dane County District Attorney.

I want to reinforce my office's commitment to supporting every member of our diverse community who experiences the trauma of victimization.

The right to safety, peace and dignity is a fundamental collective value of our Dane County government. No one should feel the need to compromise this right due to their fear of removal or separation from their loved ones if they cooperate with our office.

We recognize that for immigrant members of our community, the trauma of victimization can be compounded by the fear of being questioned about their legal status and the uncertainty of being involved in the criminal justice system. I want to make it clear that no matter who you are or where you come from, my office is committed to helping make Dane County a safe and welcoming place for all.

Increased fear of mass deportations has already inhibited some members of our most vulnerable populations from reporting their victimization to law enforcement – this reality perpetuates a cycle of violence and criminality that have a chilling effect on our entire community. Our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods become less safe when our neighbors and loved ones are afraid to report crimes and engage in our criminal justice system.

We are committed to our mission to ensure every Dane County resident, regardless of their legal status, feels safe cooperating with our prosecutors and exercising their rights as crime victims.

By offering culturally-relevant, trauma-informed services our Crime Response Program provides 24/7 services to victims of crime, their families, and witnesses, on-scene, or in the early stages of an investigation. These services include crisis intervention, short- and long-term safety planning, and referrals to mental health providers and community partners.

Our Victim/Witness Unit is available to crime victims throughout the criminal court process to provide information about court proceedings, as well as offer support and advocacy along the way.

We are proud to have full-time bilingual, bi-cultural staff in both programs to assist victims and witnesses whose first language is Spanish, and all of our services are accessible in any language and to every victim, whether they are undocumented or a US citizen.

The Dane County District Attorney's Office plays an important role in the review and certification of "U" nonimmigrant status visas or (U visa) applications.

In 2021, we created a certification review policy that has since been shared with partner agencies around Wisconsin. Every crime victim in Dane County receives information on this invaluable public safety resource, which, for cooperative and qualifying applicants, can set them on a path toward lawful permanent residence.

When victims are engaged, law enforcement and district attorneys are better able to investigate and prosecute cases involving domestic violence, child abuse, violent assaults, and other crimes.

The District Attorney's Office is separate from the federal government; we are not immigration enforcement.

A collateral consequence of mass deportations is the creation of a pathway for violent offenders who are facing serious criminal charges to evade accountability. When undocumented offenders are removed from Dane County before they get a chance to exercise their right to a fair trial, their victims are deprived of justice and our larger communities are placed at an even greater risk.

We will continue to do our jobs and deliver the same high-quality services to all visitors and residents of Dane County. We remain steadfast in our belief that a lack of status does not equate to a lack of justice.

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