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**STATEMENT ON TRUMP'S PRESS VISIT TO GRAND RAPIDS**

*Party Chair speaks out against artificial immigration talking points and expected exploitation of Grand Rapids shooting for political gains by GOP presidential front runner*

[GRAND RAPIDS, MI – April 1] – The Kent County Democratic Party Chair, Kim Gates, released the following statement today regarding Trump's visit and his anticipated comments tomorrow:

While Trump touts immigration as the focus of his visit to Grand Rapids, we know that it is actually "Trump's Terror Taunts" that truly keep the immigration issue alive.

After months of bi-partisan work to hammer out a vital immigration bill, Republicans in both the U.S. House and Senate ultimately yielded to objections from Trump rather than governing by taking action. The House Speaker now refuses to bring a vote to the floor, halting any hope for progress and allowing artificially created ammunition for Trump's campaign instead.

If passed, this immigration reform bill would have promoted collaboration between federal immigration authorities and state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration laws. It would crack down on visa overstay and employer sanctions for hiring undocumented workers.



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Passage would have meant:

- Enhanced technology could be provided for surveillance to monitor border areas more effectively.
- Funds could be allocated for additional border security measures such as personnel, technology, and infrastructure to prevent illegal crossings.
- Measures could be implemented to expedite the deportation process for individuals who have violated immigration laws.

Overall, there would be a priority on enforcement actions against individuals who have committed serious crimes or who pose a threat to national security. **Instead, the Republican party has walked away from preventing crime and improving national security.**

By implementing measures to strengthen border security and enforce immigration laws as well as finding pathways to legal status, the bipartisan immigration bill would have established the rule of law and ensured it was upheld while still recognizing the realities of immigration challenges. Yet, **the Republican party would rather cave to Trump's demands so he can keep his artificially-contrived talking points on immigration.**

By addressing immigration issues in a bipartisan manner, our national leaders would not only have been governing appropriately but also taking steps to reduce political polarization, promote social cohesion, and create a sense of unity around the issue of immigration. **Clearly, the MAGA-led GOP would rather support a leader who stokes fear, aggression and division.**

Now that same leader comes to Grand Rapids to expand his exploitation of not just the political rhetoric, but also the lives of



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those affected most by it. And it is distasteful, dishonest and disingenuous.

The senseless death of Ruby Garcia is a tragedy and a deeply felt personal loss. Yet, in coming to Grand Rapids at this exact moment, Trump chooses not to honor her memory as a victim of domestic violence but rather that of her killer, who happens to be an undocumented immigrant. Ruby Garcia died because her boyfriend had an illegal gun, regardless of immigration status.

Yet, this situation is far less common among undocumented immigrants than the MAGA rhetoric would lead us to believe. And worse, it is sadly far more the case among American citizens.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, **undocumented immigrants in the U.S. have a homicide conviction rate 14% below that of native-born Americans** and immigrants have a 62% lower rate as a whole. **Undocumented immigrants have a 41% lower total criminal conviction rate overall than native-born Americans.**

Democrats and many Republicans want immigration reform. It is imperative to ask: Who is keeping this bill from becoming law? The undisputed answer is Trump and other MAGA Republicans who fear his wrath if they vote for a bill that he is using as political fodder. And it is sickening to see Ruby Garcia's life and loss used as a political pawn.

MAGA Republicans are actively trying to make the crisis at the border worse in order to advance their own political agenda. They want to play on peoples' fears and keep this issue raw and festering until the November elections. **After years of talk about securing the border, Trump has once and for all proven he would rather put politics first.**



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We can and *should* start working on the issue of immigration now. However, we need leaders and legislators who have the courage to do what is necessary, desirable, and possible.

This election comes down to a clear choice: **Donald Trump wants to play politics with our immigration system. Joe Biden is working to fix it.**

***Kim Gates***

*Kent County Democratic Party Chair*

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## ABOUT KENT COUNTY DEMOCRATS

For more than three decades, the Kent County Democratic Party has been a grassroots organization centered on advancing progressive goals like quality public education, affordable health care, economic and racial justice, workers' rights, gender equality, and protecting the environment. We work hard all year, every year, to elect Democrats and move our country forward.

Anyone wishing to be more involved in supporting the county party's efforts to elect Democrats up and down the ballot are welcome to join the party and/or volunteer for the numerous election year activities in 2024. Supporters interested in joining the local party are welcome to attend monthly meetings at the headquarters or volunteer for campaign projects.

Visit [www.kentdems.com](http://www.kentdems.com) to sign up and get engaged.

Contact us by email at [info@kentdems.com](mailto:info@kentdems.com), call (616) 406-1573, or stop by our office at 301 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Our office is currently open Monday-Friday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.