

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@washpost.com

Show courage of conviction

Regarding the Feb. 22 editorial "A streak of cruelty on immigration":

Sixty years ago, Virginia and numerous counties and cities acted on the principles they espoused to oppose federal mandates for integration of public facilities. If anything positive can be said about this effort, it is that the folks who made that effort had the courage of their convictions, even if their convictions were rotten. Standing on principle in the face of substantial risk, whether political, financial or in some cases personal, is noteworthy. Few elected officials do it, as it tends to be hazardous to one's political career.

If George Wallace could stand in the schoolhouse door and defy what he deemed an illegitimate federal mandate to integrate Alabama's public schools, we should have the spine to take the hits associated with defying any federal mandate to have our police officers and sheriff's deputies identify undocumented immigrants who have committed no offense of consequence sufficient to justify deportation. Our law enforcement personnel should not be turned into an American version of the French Milice (a French paramilitary organization created by the Vichy regime to round up French Jews and others for deportation to concentration camps).

Pronouncements about diversity and fairness are important and a fine start. But the rubber hits the road with the policies that our authorities enforce, and with the actions taken and not taken by law enforcement personnel to identify and round up undocumented immigrants. Actions are what matter, not pronouncements.

Victor M. Glasberg, Alexandria