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Immigrants without state ID will be allowed to use other forms if stopped by Dallas-area police

By Elvia Limon, Communities Writer

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FARMERS BRANCH -- Several North Texas police departments say that if stopped or questioned, immigrants without state-issued ID will be allowed to identify themselves with other paperwork.

Police chiefs from Carrollton, Dallas and Farmers Branch told a crowd of 1,500 people at a **Dallas-Area Interfaith** meeting Sunday afternoon that they would recognize utility bills, library cards, church membership cards and other forms of IDs.

"The Dallas Police Department will always work with you," said Deputy Chief Gary Tittle. "We recognize that a state ID is the best form of identification, however, if all the identification that you have is from a parish or is a utility bill, something is better than nothing."

The chiefs answered questions from North Texas faith leaders and community members at Mary Immaculate Catholic Church about what types of identification is acceptable for an immigrant stopped or questioned by a law enforcement officer under a law banning sanctuary cities in Texas.

The controversial law has harsh penalties, including the removal of elected officials who violate the ban, and steep daily penalties for jurisdictions that don't comply. An appeals court panel in New Orleans will hear oral arguments on a lower court's ruling to block major parts of the law later this week.

Gov. Greg Abbott and others who back the law said that people would not be pulled over and questioned by police if they had not committed a crime and that racial profiling laws will be strictly enforced.

The Rev. Mike Walsh of Holy Trinity Catholic Church said the law has created uncertainty and concern among immigrant communities in Texas.

"Not having an ID can be intimidating to report a crime," he said. "That's why we need to help immigrants feel secure enough to report crimes."

Attendees with a Texas ID were urged to carry several forms of identification with them at all times.

Carrollton's newly appointed police chief, Derick Miller, and Farmers Branch Chief David Hale, said that like Dallas, their departments would also accept non-state-issued IDs and provide training to help officers recognize the alternative forms of identification.

Miller asked the crowd to put their trust in local law enforcement and report problems and crime to police.

"We absolutely need your help to solve crime," he said. "Those who trust us we plan to maintain your trust. Those of us who are uncertain, we are here for you."