



## Statement from Sheriff Todd Rowell

July 30, 2025

On June 5, 2025, Caroline Dias-Goncalves was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials outside of Fruita, Colorado. Her detainment was facilitated as result of her information being shared by Mesa County Sheriff's Deputy Alexander Zwinck to a group chat containing representatives from local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, including Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

As Mesa County Sheriff, I take full responsibility for this incident. The Mesa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has well-established practices limiting our involvement in immigration enforcement. However, the Administrative Review conducted in response to Miss Dias-Goncalves' detainment highlighted the need for enhanced training and clarification of evolving legal responsibilities under Colorado Senate Bill 25-276, which had been signed into law 13 days prior to this stop. As Sheriff, I take seriously our duty to ensure Deputies remain informed of legal changes impacting our operations.

Based on our findings, the Mesa County Sheriff's Office should not have had any role in the chain of events leading to Miss Dias-Goncalves's detention, and I regret that this occurred. I apologize to Miss Dias-Goncalves.

I have pushed for collaboration with state and federal partners to solve crime in our community. In the area of drug interdiction, HSI has been our primary federal law enforcement partner. Although discussions were had with HSI supervision in the months preceding this incident to ensure my Deputies would not be involved in immigration enforcement, the Administrative Review showed that those lines of collaboration were crossed.

The Administrative Review of events which led to Miss Dias-Goncalves' detainment has been a meticulous process. Our ultimate goal has been to identify potential training, supervision, and policy failures within our Agency to rectify them through thoughtful and well-informed revisions. It is for this reason that I am deeply disappointed in Attorney General Phil Weiser's choice to announce his lawsuit against Deputy Zwinck prior to the completion of our investigation and prior to the determination of internal discipline. Despite the Attorney General's Office being well informed of the timeline for our Administrative Review, I was given no notice that they were filing a lawsuit

against Deputy Zwinck and was given only two hours-notice of Attorney General Weiser's press conference on July 22, 2025.

On June 18, 2025, I reached out to Attorney General Weiser to brief him on the information we had regarding the incident involving Miss Dias-Goncalves, as well as the steps we were taking to investigate the incident and our actions to ensure our policies and procedures are within Colorado Law. Attorney General Weiser refused to speak with me, but I was able to meet with members of his staff on June 24, 2025. I have been transparent with the Attorney General's Office and, other than not allowing the Attorney General's Office to interview my Deputies during the pendency of our Administrative Review, I have fully cooperated with all of their requests.

Along with other documentation, I provided the Attorney General's Office with an unredacted download of the group chat, which was quoted several times within the lawsuit and Attorney General Weiser's press conference. The group chat clearly shows Colorado State Patrol Troopers, who are prohibited from sharing personal identifying information with ICE under SB 21-131 enacted June 25, 2021, and other local law enforcement agents, subject to SB 25-276, engaging in conduct similar to Deputy Zwinck's. This was pointed out to the Attorney General's staff with no substantive response provided. Likewise, the same day Attorney General Weiser announced his lawsuit targeting Deputy Zwinck, the Denver Post reported that the Governor has violated SB 21-131 on four separate occasions by providing personal identifying information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

I ask that Attorney General Weiser apply the law equally to all law enforcement and government officials instead of making Deputy Zwinck an example. This would include filing lawsuits and hosting press conferences for each state and local law enforcement officer in the group chat and other government officials who have violated SB 21-131 and SB 25-276. Alternatively, I request the Attorney General dismiss the lawsuit against Deputy Zwinck to allow internal discipline and training to take place as law enforcement across Colorado adjusts to SB 25-276.

As it stands, the lawsuit filed by the Attorney General's Office sends a demoralizing message to law enforcement officers across Colorado—that the law may be wielded selectively and publicly for maximum political effect rather than applied fairly and consistently.

Additionally, we encourage Homeland Security Investigations to release the Signal Chat records as a whole. As the group chat is not a record owned by the Mesa County Sheriff's Office and contains potential federal law enforcement intelligence, we do not have the ability to release the group chat as a whole. Thus, we ask that HSI, the owner of this record, release the group chat.

We have remained committed to our Administrative Review despite external factors. We remain committed to professional accountability and continuous improvement. This incident has prompted important reflection and action. With the Administrative Review completed, the following disciplinary actions have been decided:

- Deputy Alexander Zwinck has been placed on three weeks, or 120 hours, of unpaid Administrative Leave and will be removed from his current assignment on the Western Colorado Task Force and reassigned to patrol.
- Deputy Erik Olson has been placed on two weeks, or 80 hours, of unpaid Administrative Leave and will be removed from his current assignment on the Western Colorado Task Force and reassigned to patrol.
- Sergeant Joe LeMoine has been suspended without pay for two (2) days, or 16 hours.
- Lieutenant David Holdren has received a Letter of Reprimand to be placed permanently in his personnel file.
- Captain Curtis Brammer has been provided documented counseling.

The Mesa County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to learning from this experience, both via training and through feedback from our community. As such, Mesa Sheriff's Office staff members have now received in-depth training on SB 25-276. Further training will be provided to improve comprehension and implementation of immigration-based legislative changes.

Thank you for your patience during this Administrative Review process. As stated previously, the Mesa County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to transparency, which you will find in the full investigative file released on our website, and to continually improving our practices to better serve all who reside in or visit Mesa County.

Thank you,



Todd Rowell  
Mesa County Sheriff