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Date: February 20, 2025

Re: H.R.5717 - No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act

Position: OPPOSE

To: House Judiciary Committee

Dear Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Raskin, and other Distinguished Committee Members,

We are writing to you as police, sheriffs, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals as well as speakers for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). We are strongly opposed to HR 5717 - the No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act, which would block federal funds to sanctuary cities, cutting programs that many United States citizens depend upon. We believe this unconstitutional bill would also harm public safety by eroding police-community trust and diverting law enforcement resources away from tackling more serious crime.

LEAP is a nonprofit group of current and former law enforcement officials who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing criminal justice resources on the greatest threats to public safety and working toward healing police-community relations.

The No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act would cut federal funding to any state, city, or locality deemed a "sanctuary jurisdiction." This act broadly defines a sanctuary city as any jurisdiction that places any limitations on the sharing of citizenship information with federal authorities, or that upholds the right to deny ICE requests to detain specific individuals for an additional 48 hours past their jail release date. Based on this rigid definition, this act would impact at least [23 percent](#) of U.S. counties, including seven of the nation's ten most populous jurisdictions.

As punishment for choosing to limit collaboration with ICE, this act threatens cuts to any federal funds that could be used "for the benefit of" the undocumented population, such as food, shelter, healthcare, legal, and transportation services.

LawEnforcementActionPartnership.org

Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Undocumented people are already [ineligible](#) for most federal benefit programs. However, there are many programs that benefit both undocumented immigrants and United States citizens that would be vulnerable to federal cuts under the vague definitions of this act. For example, [school lunch and breakfast programs](#), [domestic violence shelters](#), [FEMA funding for natural disasters](#), and [public transportation programs](#) could be put in jeopardy, even though they benefit citizens and undocumented residents alike.

Furthermore, the No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act would deeply damage police-community trust that we depend upon to do our jobs effectively. Across policing, the research underscores that having trust from the people we serve [directly impacts public safety](#). Police are only as strong as our relationships with the public. We can only prevent, detect, and solve crime if witnesses and victims are willing to come forward to report criminal activity and work with us to address it. A report [on Latino perceptions of police](#) found that 44% of Latinos hesitate to report crime to police for fear that it could lead to investigations into the immigration status of their family or community members, even if they are legal citizens. Compelling local police to enforce federal immigration law would only further damage community trust, making victims, witnesses, and other residents less likely to report crimes or provide critical information to help us solve them.

Forcing local law enforcement to act as federal immigration agents would also divert their focus away from the greatest threats to public safety. The No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act would obligate law enforcement to dedicate precious time and resources toward burdensome information-sharing and detainer requirements, instead of solving serious crime. It would lead to countless people being detained for extended periods solely based on their immigration status, wasting limited jail space that should be reserved for those who pose the most serious threats to public safety.

The terms of the No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act also risk exposing local law enforcement departments to costly lawsuits that could further drain their already stretched resources. Many cities across the country have been forced to pay massive [settlements](#) for illegally holding people based on requested ICE detainers, a practice that would become more frequent as police hope to avoid cuts to essential federal programs in their communities. For example, New York City recently agreed to a [\\$92.5 million](#) settlement stemming from a lawsuit claiming authorities had detained 20,000 people for days, weeks, or even months after their scheduled release dates due to ICE detainer requests. The proposed act would put state and local governments in the impossible position of deciding between risking cuts to essential federal programs or inviting potential legal action for violating the civil rights of their community members.

We are deeply concerned to see the federal government consider blocking federal funds to sanctuary jurisdictions, including through attacks on programs that many U.S. citizens depend on. As law enforcement, we adamantly oppose HR 5717 because forcing local police to act as federal immigration agents would harm public safety by eroding community trust and diverting critical resources away from more serious crime.

Respectfully,

Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
Redondo Beach Police Department
Executive Director, The Law Enforcement Action Partnership

Major Neill Franklin (Ret.)
Maryland State Police

Deputy Chief Wayne Harris (Ret.)
Rochester Police Department, NY

Sgt. Carl Tennenbaum (Ret.)
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Chicago Police Department

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Park County, MT

Det. Sgt. J. Gary Nelson (Ret.)
Scottsdale Police Department, AZ

Maj. Mike Hilliard (Ret.)
Baltimore Police Department

Det. Sgt. Ted Nelson (Ret.)
Michigan State Police

Judge Gordon McAllister (Ret.)
District Court of Tulsa, OK

Officer Jeff Kaufman (Fmr.)
New York Police Department

Chief Chris Magnus (Ret.)
Tucson Police Department

Capt. Leigh Maddox (Ret.)
Maryland State Police

Deputy Chief Stephen Downing (Ret.)
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