



# LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: April 9, 2025

Re: Sanctuary Cities

To: The Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement

Dear Chair McClintock and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Major Neill Franklin (Ret.) and I am here today representing myself, having served a 34 year law enforcement career in the Baltimore Police Department and Maryland State Police, as well as representing the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), where I was the executive director for an additional 10 years.

LEAP is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety and working toward improving police-community relations.

While we strongly believe that effective border security is imperative for public safety, we adamantly oppose any proposals that would punish sanctuary cities and mandate state and local law enforcement to play a significant role in the enforcement of federal immigration law. We believe routine, civil immigration enforcement by local officers would harm public safety by eroding police-community trust and diverting law enforcement resources away from tackling more serious crime.

Ordering state and local law enforcement to act as ICE agents would deeply damage police-community trust that we depend upon to do our jobs effectively. Across policing, the research<sup>1</sup> underscores that having trust from the people we serve directly impacts public safety.<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup> found that 44% of Latinos hesitate to report crime to police for fear that it could lead to investigations into

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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. Local law enforcement should not be forced 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.

Proposed bans to sanctuary cities also pose constitutional and civil liabilities for local police departments and jails, exposing them to costly lawsuits that could further drain their already stretched resources. Many cities across the country have been forced to pay massive settlements<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> 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.

Furthermore, one solution does not fit all. Cities and towns are each unique with very different needs, requiring different solutions for various problems. Each community should be free to design its own strategies absent sanctions of any kind from the federal government.

We are deeply concerned to see the federal government considering blocking federal funds to sanctuary jurisdictions, and mandating local law enforcement to act as ICE agents. 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.

Sincerely,

Major Neill Franklin (Ret.)  
Maryland State Police

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- <sup>1</sup> Goff, Phillip Atiba. “The Truth About Trust and Police.” *Legal Defense Fund*, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 1 Aug. 2018, [www.naacpldf.org/naacp-publications/ldf-blog/the-truth-about-trust-and-police/](http://www.naacpldf.org/naacp-publications/ldf-blog/the-truth-about-trust-and-police/).
- <sup>2</sup> La Vigne, Nancy, et al. “How Do People in High-Crime, Low-Income Communities ...” *Justice Policy Center*, Urban Institute , Feb. 2017, [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88476/how\\_do\\_people\\_in\\_high-crime\\_view\\_the\\_police.pdf](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88476/how_do_people_in_high-crime_view_the_police.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> Theodore, Nik. “Policylink.” *Department of Planning and Policy* , University of Illinois at Chicago , 2013, [www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/INSECURE\\_COMMUNITIES\\_REPORT\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/INSECURE_COMMUNITIES_REPORT_FINAL.PDF).
- <sup>4</sup> “Local Jurisdictions Remain Legally Vulnerable for Honoring ICE Detainers.” *ACLU*, 3 Feb. 2020, [www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field\\_document/ice\\_detainer\\_damages\\_cases\\_0.pdf](http://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/ice_detainer_damages_cases_0.pdf).
- <sup>5</sup> Ferré-sadurní, Luis. “New York City to Pay \$92.5 Million to Improperly Detained Immigrants.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 18 Dec. 2024, [www.nytimes.com/2024/12/18/nyregion/migrants-detention-settlement-deportation.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/18/nyregion/migrants-detention-settlement-deportation.html).

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