

DEMOGRAPHICS

TribBlog: Houston No Sanctuary, Annise Parker Says

Bill White's successor as Houston's nonpartisan mayor, Annise Parker, is staying out of the governor's race. She does, though, have a clear opinion on the Rick Perry campaign's "sanctuary city" charge.

BY [MATT STILES](#)

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Houston City Hall City of Houston

One can imagine that the City of Houston's policy on illegal immigration — that its police officers don't ask about residents' citizenship unless they're arrested for a crime — will be an issue in the governor's race. Republican Gov. [Rick Perry](#)'s campaign consultant, Dave Carney, [gave us a hint](#) recently with a memo that mentions the Democratic nominee [Bill White](#), who led the Bayou City from 2004 to January:

Mayor White is another in a long line of dream team mirages that the net roots of the left have fabricated. In this political environment no competitive state will elect a big city trial lawyer, anti gun, **sanctuary city promoting**, Clinton protégé DC politician, let alone a conservative state like Texas. (Emphasis added).

The term "[sanctuary city](#)" has no legal meaning, but it's become a rallying cry for many with concerns about illegal immigration. It generally refers to municipalities that have established

policies prohibiting police officers from enforcing immigration laws or cooperating with federal immigration officials. (Texas [law](#), it should be noted, states that police officers generally cannot arrest people without probable cause of a crime, and immigration violations often are civil matters, not criminal cases). Some think Houston is a sanctuary city, while others — including the region’s top immigration enforcement official — reject that.

“Houston is not a sanctuary city, by the definition,” Robert Rutt, special agent in charge of [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)’s Houston office, [told me](#) four years ago. “They do cooperate with us.”

White’s successor as Houston’s nonpartisan Mayor, [Annise Parker](#), is staying out of the governor’s race. She does, though, have a [clear opinion](#) on the “sanctuary city” charge:

“Houston is not a sanctuary city. If you break a law in Houston, we will arrest you, we will take you to jail, and, if you’re in this country illegally, we will turn you over to the appropriate federal agency, generally ICE. We will do it day and day after day, and we have been doing it for a very long time. What we don’t do is divert our police officers to stop people on the street and inquire about immigration status. That’s a waste of resources.”

Parker sat down with The Tribune today for a 30-minute interview. We’ll post the full video later this week.

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