



July 20, 2015

Dear Senator:

We write on behalf of mayors and their city governments to register our strong opposition to legislation that would withhold federal law enforcement assistance from so-called "sanctuary cities."

We believe that decisions related to how law enforcement agencies prioritize their resources, direct their workforce, and define the duties of their employees must reside with local government leadership. This includes defining the role of local police officers in the context of enforcing federal immigration laws. It is our strong belief that effective policing cannot be achieved by forcing an unwanted role upon the police by threat of sanctions or withholding of law enforcement assistance funding as has been proposed.

At a time when law enforcement agencies are working hard to strengthen police-community relations and build trust, legislative proposals to withdraw funding from communities are particularly troubling and counterproductive to those efforts.

Building relationships based on trust with immigrant communities is central to overall public safety, according to the recently released President's Task Force Recommendations on 21st Century Policing. In order to strengthen these relationships and to foster the trust so essential to public safety, the Task Force also recommended terminating the Department of Homeland Security's use of the state and local criminal justice system, to enforce civil immigration laws against civil and non-serious criminal offenders, including through detention, notification, and transfer requests.

Further, shifting the federal responsibility of enforcing civil immigration law to state and local governments diverts critical resources from their law enforcement agencies, compromises public safety, and hinders local police department efforts to work with immigrant communities in preventing and solving crimes.

Immigration enforcement laws and practices must be nationally based, consistent, and fully funded by the federal government. Immigration is a federal, not a state or local, responsibility.

We urge you not to take precipitous action that will have a negative impact on law enforcement agencies and public safety across the nation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tom Cochran in black ink.

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The United States Conference of Mayors

Handwritten signature of Clarence E. Anthony in black ink.

Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities