

Justice for Victims of Sanctuary Cities Act

Giving victims of sanctuary city policies a legal pathway to justice

Background: Sanctuary city policies threaten the safety of American citizens. In June 2019, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released a list of criminal illegal aliens that were allowed back into their sanctuary communities by local officials. One such criminal is Rosalio Ramos-Romas, a Hondurian citizen who was deported four times before authorities arrested him in Washington State in October 2017.¹

Once notified of Rosalio's arrest, ICE issued a written detainer request, asking the local authorities to imprison him for an additional 48 hours so they could decide whether to begin deportation proceedings. Instead, local authorities ignored the detainer request and released Rosalio back into the community. In January 2018, he murdered his cousin and hid the body in a dumpster.

Situations like these are more common than they should be in our country, as many local officials protect undocumented immigrants and ignore federal immigration laws up to the point of leaving dangerous individuals in their communities. As you can see from this horrific example, refusing to honor detainer requests and frustrating federal law enforcement has dire consequences. Not only does it make our nation less safe, it leaves no room for the victims of these offenders to obtain justice. This must be addressed.

Policy: This bill would allow anyone (and their family) who is a victim of murder, rape, or any felony to file a lawsuit and bring civil action against the state or sanctuary city if that city failed to honor a lawful immigration detainer request from the Department of Homeland Security. Any individual who is injured or harmed by an illegal immigrant who benefited from sanctuary city policies will be able to sue the sanctuary city or state.²

The bill also:

1. **Strips federal funding from sanctuary cities who refuse to waive a criminal's immunity.** This bill requires sanctuary cities to waive a criminal's immunity as a condition of receiving certain federal grants such as those for public works, grant planning and administrative expenses, supplementary grants and grants for training, research, and technical assistance. If the sanctuary city refuses to comply, it may lose federal grant funding.
2. **Maintains protections for illegal immigrants who are victims and who witness crimes.** This bill ensures that the federal government does not deem a state or political

¹ Hopkins, Jason. "ICE Releases List of Murderers, Rapists Protected by Sanctuary Policies." The Daily Signal, June 19, 2019. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2019/06/19/ice-releases-list-of-murderers-and-rapists-protected-under-sanctuary-city-policies/>.

² "Reps. Budd and Byrne Introduce Bill to Hold Sanctuary Cities Accountable." U.S. Congressman Ted Budd, July 25, 2019. <https://budd.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=622>.

subdivision of a state a “sanctuary jurisdiction” based solely on policies where officials do not share information or comply with detainers for illegal immigrants who come forward as a victim or a witness to a criminal offense.

Rationale:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) relies on local law enforcement officials to cooperate and quickly remove dangerous criminals from our communities. When local officials refuse, it puts our communities at risk and our citizens in danger.³ It’s time for Congress to pass legislation that forces sanctuary cities to comply with federal law enforcement and to stop them from letting dangerous criminals infiltrate our streets. It is also time to finally give victims of sanctuary city policies a legal pathway to justice.

³ “Cooperation between ICE, Local Law Enforcement Makes for Safer Communities.” ICE. Accessed September 10, 2019. <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/cooperation-between-ice-local-law-enforcement-makes-safer-communities>.