



June 28, 2017

Dear Member of Congress:

As law enforcement leaders dedicated to preserving the safety and security of our communities, we have concerns about legislative proposals that would attempt to impose punitive, “one-size-fits-all” policies on state and local law enforcement. Rather than strengthening state and local law enforcement by providing us with the tools to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in a manner that is responsive to the needs of our communities, these proposals would represent a step backwards.

Attempts to defund so-called sanctuary cities regularly sweep too broadly, punishing jurisdictions that engage in well-established community policing practices or adhere to federal court decisions that have found federal immigration detainees to violate constitutional protections. We oppose these approaches and urge Congress to work to encourage – rather than compel – law enforcement agency cooperation within our federal system.

We believe that law enforcement should not cut corners. Multiple federal courts have questioned the legality and constitutionality of federal immigration detainees that are not accompanied by a criminal warrant signed by a judge. Even though the legality of such immigration holds is doubtful, some have proposed requiring states and localities to enforce them, shielding them from lawsuits. While this approach would reduce potential legal liability faced by some jurisdictions and departments, we are concerned these proposals would still require our agencies and officers carry out federal directives that could violate the U.S. Constitution, which we are sworn to follow.

Immigration enforcement is, first and foremost, a federal responsibility. Making our communities safer means better defining roles and improving relationships between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities. But in attempting to defund “sanctuary cities” and require state and local law enforcement to carry out the federal government’s immigration enforcement responsibilities, the federal government would be substituting its judgment for the judgment of state and local law enforcement agencies. Local control has been a beneficial approach for law enforcement for decades – having the federal government compel state and local law enforcement to carry out new and sometimes problematic tasks undermines the delicate federal balance and will harm locally-based policing.

Rather than requiring state and local law enforcement agencies to engage in additional immigration enforcement activities, Congress should focus on overdue reforms of the broken immigration system to allow state and local law enforcement to focus their resources on true threats – dangerous criminals and criminal organizations. We believe that state and local law enforcement must work together with federal authorities to protect our communities and that we can best serve our communities by leaving the enforcement of immigration laws to the federal government. Threatening the removal of valuable grant funding that contributes to the health and well-being of communities across the nation would not make our communities safer and would not fix any part of our broken immigration system.



Our immigration problem is a national problem deserving of a national approach, and we continue to recognize that what our broken system truly needs is a permanent legislative solution – broad-based immigration reform.

Sincerely,

Chief Chris Magnus, Tucson, AZ

Chief Roy Minter, Peoria, AZ

Chief Sylvia Moir, Tempe, AZ

Ret. Chief Roberto Villasenor, Tucson, AZ

Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles, CA

Ret. Chief James Lopez, Los Angeles County, CA

Sheriff Margaret Mims, Fresno County, CA

Sheriff Mike Chitwood, Volusia County, FL

Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, Story County, IA

Chief Wayne Jerman, Cedar Rapids, IA

Sheriff Bill McCarthy, Polk County, IA

Public Safety Director, Mark Prosser, Storm Lake, IA

Sheriff Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County, IA

Chief Mike Tupper, Marshalltown, IA

Chief William Bones, Boise, ID

Ret. Chief Ron Teachman, South Bend, IN

Ret. Chief James Hawkins, Garden City, KS

Commissioner William Evans, Boston, MA

Chief Ken Ferguson, Framingham, MA

Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea, MA

Chief Tom Manger, Montgomery County, MD

Chief Todd Axtell, Saint Paul, MN

Sheriff Eli Rivera, Cheshire County, NH

Chief Richard Biehl, Dayton, OH

Chief Cel Rivera, Lorain, OH

Public Safety Commissioner Steven Pare, Providence, RI

Chief William Holbrook, Columbia, SC

Sheriff Leon Lott, Richland County, SC



Ret. Chief Fred Fletcher, Chattanooga, TN

Chief Art Acevedo, Houston, TX

Sheriff Edward Gonzalez, Harris County, TX

Sheriff Sally Hernandez, Travis County, TX

Chief Brian Manley, Austin, TX

Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Dallas County, TX

Ret. Chief Chris Burbank, Salt Lake City, UT

Chief Kathleen O'Toole, Seattle, WA

Sheriff John Urquhart, King County, WA

Asst. Chief Randy Gaber, Madison, WI

Chief Michael Koval, Madison, WI

Chief Todd Thomas, Appleton, WI

*Signatures updated as of June 28, 2017 5 PM ET