

Police Chief: 'Communities Are Safer When Law Enforcement Roles
Are Clear'

Rather Than Target 'Sanctuary Cities,' Clarify Immigration Enforcement, He Argues

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The July 1 shooting death of Kathryn Steinle has sparked a debate about so-called sanctuary cities. In an op-ed that published in *The Hill* this morning, Dayton, Ohio, Police Chief Richard S. Biehl argues that attacks on such cities are misguided.

"The Steinle murder is a clarion call to resolve the important but different roles assigned to local police and officials of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE] in keeping our communities and country safe," Biehl writes. "At the heart of this debate is an important question — whether local police should carry out immigration policing functions or federal authorities should take the lead in carrying out these functions.

"Relying on state and local law enforcement to carry out federal immigration enforcement responsibilities is highly problematic. Having state and local law enforcement take on the work of federal immigration officials undermines community policing and is counterproductive.

"... Sanctuary policies and practices are not designed to harbor criminals. On the contrary, they exist to support community policing, ensuring that the community at large — including immigrant communities — trusts state and local law enforcement and feels secure in reporting criminal conduct.

"... Instead of considering how to punish these 'sanctuary cities,' Congress should be working to reform our broken immigration system," Biehl concludes.

Read the full op-ed in [The Hill](#).

"The problem is not so-called sanctuary cities," said **Jacinta Ma, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the National Immigration Forum**. "We need a clear and unified approach to immigration enforcement that promotes trust. Without immigration reform, cities and local law enforcement are left to address these issues on their own, and the result is a system that fails."

Chief Biehl is a member of the Forum's [Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force](#), which launched in January to underscore the need for immigration reform that improve community safety and promote respect for the rule of law. The Task Force comprises more than 35 police chiefs, sheriffs, commissioners and lieutenants from across the country.

