



LAW ENFORCEMENT IMMIGRATION TASK FORCE

February 15, 2018

Dear Senator:

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 detainers 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 detainers 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,

Lt. Andy Norris, Tuscaloosa, AL

Chief Mike Soelberg, Gilbert, AZ

Chief Sylvia Moir, Tempe, AZ

Chief Chris Magnus, Tucson, AZ

Retired Chief James Lopez, Los Angeles County, CA

Sheriff Margaret Mims, Fresno County, CA

Chief Matt Basgall, Clovis, CA

Chief Jerry Dyer, Fresno, CA

Chief Charlie Beck, Los Angeles, CA

Sheriff Donny Youngblood, Kern County, CA

Chief Dwight Henninger, Vail, CO

Sheriff Joe Pelle, Boulder County, CO

Sheriff Bill McCarthy, Polk County, IA

Director of Public Safety Mark Prosser, Storm Lake, IA

Chief Mike Tupper, Marshalltown, IA

Chief Wayne Jerman, Cedar Rapids, IA

Sheriff Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County, IA

Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, Story County, IA

Chief William Bones, Boise, ID

Chief Cliff Katona, Shoshone, ID

Sheriff Mark Curran, Lake County, IL

Retired Chief Ron Teachman, South Bend, IN

Retired Chief James Hawkins, Garden City, KS

Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea, MA

Chief David Fallon, Somerville, MA

Chief Ken Ferguson, Framingham, MA

Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Cumberland County, ME
Chief Tom Manger, Montgomery County, MD
Chief Ron Haddad, Dearborn, MI
Sheriff Jerry Clayton, Washtenaw County, MI
Chief Todd Axtell, Saint Paul, MN
Retired Sheriff Mike Haley, Washoe County, NV
Chief Richard Biehl, Dayton, OH
Chief Cel Rivera, Lorain, OH
Commissioner of Public Safety Steven Pare, Providence, RI
Chief William Holbrook, Columbia, SC
Chief David Roddy, Chattanooga, TN
Retired Chief Fred Fletcher, Chattanooga, TN
Chief Art Acevedo, Houston, TX
Interim Sheriff Marian Brown, Dallas County, TX
Retired Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Dallas County, TX
Sheriff Edward Gonzalez, Harris County, TX
Chief Brian Manley, Austin, TX
Chief Mike Brown, Salt Lake City, UT
Retired Chief Chris Burbank, Salt Lake City, UT
Interim Chief Carmen Best, Seattle, WA
Assistant Chief Randy Gaber, Madison, WI
Chief Mike Koval, Madison, WI
Chief Todd Thomas, Appleton, WI
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*Signatures updated as of February 15, 2018 2 PM ET