

## **AIS Opposes Amendments limiting funding to jurisdictions for having sanctuary policies**

The Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS) advocates for a future where everyone, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, country of origin, or differing ability can live in safety and thrive. We defend and advocate for policies that ensure immigrant survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, rape, human trafficking, and other gender-based violence have access to safety, autonomy, and life-saving protections.

Every year, we see anti-immigrant amendments introduced in legislative and budgetary processes that would hinder immigrants' access to legal status and increase their vulnerability to exploitation. We strongly oppose any amendment that interferes with the ability of immigrant survivors to seek safety and provide for themselves and their families, including the example described below. For questions, follow-up, and media inquiries, please contact us at [info@immigrantsurvivors.org](mailto:info@immigrantsurvivors.org).

### **AIS strongly opposes amendments limiting funding to jurisdictions for having sanctuary policies.**

We oppose any increased entanglement between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement and oppose any efforts to withhold federal funds from jurisdictions considered to be “sanctuary cities.” All residents need to have trust and confidence in their local law enforcement agencies, and that is especially true for immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking. There is deeply-held and justified fear of deportation that keeps immigrant survivors from coming forward to report abuse. Abusers and traffickers often use immigration status and the fear of deportation as a tool of power and control to silence survivors. *Without the ability to trust local law enforcement, survivors do not report crimes, witnesses abstain from coming forward with information, perpetrators go unpunished, and abuse continues.*

Sanctuary city policies take many forms, but broadly act to limit local agencies from participating in federal immigration enforcement. Hundreds of cities and a handful of states have adopted such policies to help ensure the safety and security of their residents.<sup>1</sup> Sanctuary cities are shown to be safer – a study showed that on average, counties that did not comply with ICE requests experienced 35.5 fewer crimes per 10,000 people than those that did. They also found that counties that did not comply with detainer requests had higher household incomes, lower rates of unemployment, lower rates of poverty, and were less likely to have children under 18 in households receiving public benefits.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ILRC, National Map of Local Entanglement with ICE, see <https://www.ilrc.org/local-enforcement-map>; The Rise of Sanctuary (2018), see <https://www.ilrc.org/rise-sanctuary>

<sup>2</sup> NPR (2017), Why Sanctuary Cities are Safer, see <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/01/29/512002076/why-sanctuary-cities-are-safer>

# ALLIANCE FOR IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

Local officials know what's best for their communities, and the federal government should not impose a one-size-fits-all approach to law enforcement in cities and towns across the country by limiting funding to those that have sanctuary policies. It is the responsibility of the federal government to enforce federal immigration laws and the responsibility of local officials to keep their communities safe. When the federal government overrules the judgment of local law enforcement to serve its own interests, public safety suffers. When much-needed federal funds are contingent on immigration enforcement efforts, local officials are put in an impossible position: they must either divert their limited resources to do the federal government's immigration enforcement work – which will undermine their primary mission of ensuring public safety – or risk losing federal support designed to enhance public safety and welfare.

Numerous law enforcement and local officials have spoken out in support of sanctuary city policies. As the Major Cities Chiefs Association stated: "Without assurances that contact with the police would not result in purely civil immigration enforcement action, the hard won trust, communication and cooperation from the immigrant community would disappear. Such a divide between the local police and immigrant groups would result in increased crime against immigrants and in the broader community, create a class of silent victims and eliminate the potential for assistance from immigrants in solving crimes or preventing future terroristic acts."<sup>3</sup> As a police chief in Ohio stated: "Since Dayton adopted these policies and innovative ways of addressing crime problems, our crime rates have significantly declined. In the past three years, serious violent crime has dropped nearly 22 percent while serious property crime has gone down almost 15 percent."<sup>4</sup>

**Instead of supporting these anti-immigrant amendments, Members of Congress can choose to stand with immigrant survivors of violence by enhancing immigrant protections, including those featured in our [top 5 asks for immigrant survivors](#):**

1. Lifting the cap on the number of U visas annually available – currently limited to 10,000 – to meet the need;
2. Funding USCIS to ensure they can grant timely employment authorization to VAWA self-petitioners, U and T visa applicants;
3. Preventing detention and deportation of survivors seeking asylum and eligible VAWA self-petitioners, U and T visa applicants;
4. Explicitly including survivors of gender-based violence in asylum law; and
5. Ensuring access to economic supports for immigrant survivors.

<sup>3</sup> Major Cities Chiefs (2006), see [https://www.houstontx.gov/police/pdfs/mcc\\_position.pdf](https://www.houstontx.gov/police/pdfs/mcc_position.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Richard S. Biehl, Here's How Not to Jump-Start Immigration Reform in the House, Roll Call (2014), see <https://www.rollcall.com/2014/01/24/heres-how-not-to-jump-start-immigration-reform-in-house-commentary/>