

Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/alternative-facts-sanctuary-cities-will-hurt-our-communities>

Campaign and Advocacy

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One of the major fears rising from the campaign of Donald Trump was that his rhetoric would embolden state and local officials especially those seeking to capitalize on the headlines the President is generating who wanted to roll back important Constitutional protections. Case in point: the recent announcement by state Treasurer (and 2018 U.S. Senate candidate) Josh Mandel and state Rep. Candice Keller (R-Middletown) that Keller would introduce legislation banning sanctuary cities.

Lets be clear: any law that bans local governments from refusing to enforce federal immigration laws is unconstitutional. Immigration is the sole responsibility of the federal government, and there is dedicated law enforcement charged with working on immigration. The government cannot require local communities to enforce federal laws.

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The rhetoric that Treasurer Mandel and Rep. Keller are using to publicize this legislation is directly from the Trump campaign playbook. Raising the false specter of terrorism by Muslim immigrants, they claim this is a matter of public safety. The facts just do not support this. Very few undocumented immigrants come from Muslim countries, as it requires overseas travel. Attempts to link Muslims or Arabs to terrorism are craven attempts to inflame religious and ethnic resentment to justify discrimination.

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Police are often most effective when they are able to work with local communities to identify potentially suspicious behavior. Muslim Americans care just as deeply about our country and want to prevent acts of terrorism, just like anyone else would. If these elected officials were truly concerned with preventing terrorism in our communities, they would recognize community engagement as the key to security.

Forcing local police to enforce federal immigration laws will alienate the communities they serve. Victims of crime will be afraid to come forward out of fear that they could be detained and eventually deported. Local police will be prevented from identifying and preventing crime and acts of terrorism without community support. Strong relationships need to be built on trust and respect and this legislation would undermine that.

What is most disappointing about this proposed legislation is that it goes beyond typical political grandstanding. If enacted, it would make our communities less safe and prevent our officers from being able to protect their communities.

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