

S.F. DECLARES IMMIGRANT 'SAFETY ZONE'

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Body

As state and federal governments move to cut benefits to some immigrants, San Francisco is bucking the trend by declaring the city a "safety zone" for all immigrants, including those here illegally.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has also voted to make a "good-faith effort" to provide translators at board meetings for any non-English speaker who asks for one at least 48 hours in advance.

The legislation, which Mayor Willie Brown is expected to sign, says non-citizens, including illegal immigrants, will not be denied social service and health-care benefits in San Francisco.

That puts the city in direct opposition to California's voter-approved Proposition 187. The 1994 immigration initiative seeks to cut off most state services to illegal aliens. It has yet to be enforced because of court challenges.

"If any city is going to stand up for equal rights, it's San Francisco, and I think the rest of the nation expects that from us," said Supervisor Mabel Teng, chief sponsor of the legislation.

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