

THOMPSON PLAN: TARGET IMMIGRATION HAVENS

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States and cities that provide a haven for illegal immigrants would lose federal money under an immigration reform plan unveiled Tuesday by presidential hopeful Fred Thompson.

In his first significant policy proposal of the campaign, the former Tennessee senator tackled a key issue for many conservatives, and not surprisingly, touched off a firestorm of back-and-forth accusations among the leading contenders for the Republican nomination.

Thompson's multipronged approach centers on enforcing current laws that crack down on so-called sanctuary cities, where local authorities aren't allowed to report illegal immigrants they discover to federal law enforcement officers.

"There's not a lot of new legislation that needs to be passed," he said. "We need to enforce the laws that are on the books. There are laws against illegal immigration, there are laws to secure the border, there are laws against sanctuary cities, there are laws against publicly funding illegals, and that law is being disregarded."

The former Law & Order actor invoked his television character and real-life experience as a U.S. attorney as he made the announcement at the Collier County Sheriff's Office, one of the few law enforcement agencies in the country where deputies are jointly trained as immigration officers. Thompson suggested enforcing the law by withholding federal dollars from those jurisdictions that don't listen. "I propose that we cut off some discretionary funding to those cities," he said. "If you're going to do that, you're not going to do it with federal money."

Likewise, he suggested cutting off money for colleges and universities that offer in-state tuition to students who illegally entered the country.

By addressing the issue of immigration, Thompson took direct aim at his top rivals, who have argued about the issue for weeks on the campaign trail. His campaign highlighted how Mitt Romney allowed sanctuary cities as Massachusetts governor and how Rudy Giuliani went to court to protect the city's policy of not alerting federal authorities when he was mayor of New York City.

Romney's campaign responded by saying Romney proposed cutting off aid to sanctuary cities in August. "Although Sen. Thompson is very late to the game, we welcome him to the debate," said spokeswoman Kristy Campbell.

Giuliani told reporters during an appearance in Boston that he would "build a fence, a technological fence" with a tamper-proof identification card. "I'm the one who can bring about immigration reform," he said, according to local news reports.

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As part of his **plan**, **Thompson** also said he would increase the efficiency of the **immigration** process for legal applicants, give border security officials more agents and detention space and implement a system where employers could quickly verify a job candidate's legal status.

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