



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 1, 2017

California Advances Bills to Become Sanctuary State

One of Donald Trump's first actions as president was to issue an executive order that targets sanctuary cities by directing local and state agencies to enforce existing immigration laws or face losing federal funds. In response, San Francisco is suing the Trump administration, claiming that the orders violate states' rights provisions. And in flagrant disregard of Trump's order, California is attempting to become the first-ever sanctuary state. *Mercury News* reports that Democrats in San Francisco are forging ahead with a legislative package aimed at expanding sanctuary status throughout the state of California in response to Trump's order.



At the expense of California taxpayers, Democrats in the state Senate advanced bills to create statewide sanctuary for illegal immigrants, provide money to pay for immigration lawyers on behalf of immigrants facing deportation, and stop efforts to create a Muslim registry that senators believe will be on President Trump's itinerary.

"We in California have a responsibility to say no and to be a counter balance of the nightmare coming out of Washington," San Francisco Democrat Scott Wiener insisted.

One of the bills in the package, SB 54, also known as the California Values Act, would prohibit state and local agencies from enforcing immigration laws or from working with immigration enforcement agencies. The legislation reads:

In no event shall state or local law enforcement agencies or school police or security departments transfer an individual to federal immigration authorities for purposes of immigration enforcement or detain an individual at the request of federal immigration authorities for purposes of immigration enforcement absent a judicial warrant....

The attorney general ... shall publish model policies limiting immigration enforcement to the fullest extent possible consistent with federal and state law at public schools, health facilities operated by the state or a political subdivision of the state, courthouses, and shelters, to ensure that they remain safe and accessible to all California residents, regardless of immigration status.

The bill directs the same entities not to use money or equipment to "interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest persons for immigration enforcement purposes."

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According to *Mercury News*, the 2013 California Trust Act already restricts law enforcement's abilities to detain someone for immigration authorities; however, the new measures take it a step further, preventing agencies from collecting information on legal statuses or cooperating with requests from federal agents.



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Fox News adds, “Many of California’s largest cities, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento, already have sanctuary policies that prohibit police from cooperating with immigration officials. The state is already home to an estimated 2.3 million illegal immigrants. SB54 would extend those policies statewide, prohibiting police officers and jailers from arresting or detaining people solely for immigration violations unless a judge issues a warrant.”

Democrats on the state Senate Public Safety Committee claim that SB 54 will ensure that police officers are not distracted from doing their jobs.

“We want to make sure that police officers don’t abandon their beat and go enforce immigration laws,” stated Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon of Los Angeles, who authored the sanctuary measure.

But Republicans argue that the measure will make it harder for law-enforcement groups to do their job of fighting crime effectively.

State Senator Jeff Stone declared, “I think this bill is making it that much more difficult for the federal authorities to get the most dangerous criminals that we want to deport to keep our communities safe.”

The sanctuary legislation now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.

Additionally, Assembly Bill 3, introduced by Assembly member Democrat Rob Bonta, would create state-funded centers to train defense attorneys on immigration law, while SB 6, introduced by Democratic Senator Ben Hueso, would create a state program to assist those who face deportation.

The Senate Public Safety Committee also passed a bill that prohibits state and local officials from participating in the creation of a possible Muslim registry. The bill’s author, Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens), said he was compelled to write the bill in response to statements made by Trump during his presidential campaign.

“In our country’s darkest moments, we have discriminated against whole groups of people,” Lara stated.

Though California’s Democratic Governor Jerry Brown has not commented on the bills, he has indicated that his administration’s interest is to protect and support immigrants.

“Let me be clear,” he said. “We will defend everybody — every man, woman and child — who has come here for a better life and has contributed to the well-being of our state.”

While the state of California certainly has the right to nullify federal laws that it feels are unconstitutional by simply not enforcing them, the catch, of course, is that it risks losing federal funds. As the saying goes, he who pays the piper calls the tune. If Californians do not want to adhere to federal laws, they have the option to forego federal dollars. The problem is that California Democrats feel that American taxpayers should continue to fund their illegal actions, and therein lies the problem. Likewise, those who are protecting illegal immigrants are doing a disservice to California residents who don’t wish to provide sanctuary to violators of the law, but face the repercussions of the actions of the Senate Democrats.

Republican Senator Joel Anderson of San Diego said that the Senate Democrats are merely “step[ping] on cities that don’t want to be sanctuary cities.”

And Senator John Moorlach, a Republican representing Orange County, pointed out, “If we’re getting \$100 billion in federal funding, \$85 billion of which goes to local communities, who is Sacramento to jeopardize that funding for our local communities? That’s playing chicken with somebody else’s money.”



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ABC 10 local news notes that all bills will face more hearings, but supporters are hoping to enact SB 54 and SB 6 as urgency measures, which require two-thirds votes in both the Senate and Assembly before being signed into law.

However, critics are hoping to mount enough opposition against the two measures to stop them in their tracks. We the People Rising, an advocacy group that supports strict immigration enforcement, announced that it will be actively oppose the bills. The group's Executive Director Robin Hvidston notes, "It actually puts the nation at risk when our state is crafting bills that do not uphold or respect the federal law."





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