



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 30, 2025

# DOJ Lawsuit Claims LA Sanctuary Law, Policies Trespass Supremacy Clause

The federal Justice Department (DOJ) has sued Los Angeles to overturn its unlawful sanctuary law and policies that obstruct the enforcement of federal immigration law.

In the fourth such lawsuit, this one filed in the U.S. District Court for California's Central District, the [21-page complaint alleges](#) three violations of the Constitution's Supremacy Clause. The city has also violated federal laws that forbid state and local governments from refusing to share immigration information with federal authorities, the suit says.



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The lawsuit details not only the effects of the city's illegal sanctuary statute and policies, but also its attempted obstruction of federal agents who were in the city to enforce immigration laws.

The Justice Department Files Lawsuit Against Sanctuary City Policies In Los Angeles, California

📷: <https://t.co/dTpOSlZIPN> [pic.twitter.com/IG9wQxioWU](https://pic.twitter.com/IG9wQxioWU)

— U.S. Department of Justice (@TheJusticeDept) [June 30, 2025](#)

## Sanctuary Statute

The lawsuit alleges that the city's sanctuary statute and pro-illegal-alien policies "obstruct the Federal Government's enforcement of federal immigration law and impede consultation and communication between federal, state, and local law enforcement officials that is necessary for federal officials to carry out federal immigration law and keep Americans safe."

The result of that obstruction since June 6 has "been lawlessness, rioting, looting, and vandalism," which required President Trump to call in the National Guard and U.S. Marines to bring the city under control. The [suit says](#) that

Los Angeles has sought to do nothing short of prohibit[ing] ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] from operating within city limits, directly contrary to federal immigration law.

It elaborates that, in keeping with a state ordinance passed in 2017, the city police chief

restricted cooperation with federal immigration authorities and ordered that the LAPD "shall not: [i]nvestigate, interrogate, detain, or arrest a person for civil immigration purposes; or [i]nquire into an individual's civil immigration status."



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The chief also required cops to seek approval from the police department's immigration officer before turning over dangerous felons to federal authorities. The department refused to turn over illegals guilty of civil immigration violations, did not honor detainers from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and required a federal warrant for a cop to arrest an illegal for federal immigration offense.

## **New Law to Obstruct Trump Administration**

But a new sanctuary law passed last year "goes much further," says DOJ.

The city passed the law to respond to President Trump's election victory in November. The goal: complete obstruction. The law's sponsors explained that "[w]e refuse to stand back while Donald Trump tries to deport our neighbors, family, friends, and coworkers," the [lawsuit notes](#).

City employees are forbidden do the following on behalf of ICE, the law says:

- "inquire into or collect information about an individual's Citizenship or Immigration Status," unless that information is used by local authorities to provide services to the individual;
- "investigate, cite, arrest, hold, transfer, or detain any person for the purpose of Immigration Enforcement";
- "respond to any administrative warrant or other request to detain, transfer, or notify any Immigration Agent about the status or release of **any individual** for the purpose of Immigration Enforcement" [emphasis added];
- "provide any Immigration Agent access to any non-public areas of property owned or controlled by the City, including City jails, for the purpose of Immigration Enforcement";
- "make **any person** in City custody available to any Immigration Agent for an interview for the purpose of Immigration Enforcement" [emphasis added]; and
- "participate in Immigration Enforcement in any operation, joint operation, or joint task force involving any Immigration Agent."

In other words, the city will happily protect illegal-alien rapists and murderers from deportation.

The statute also forbids employees from providing ICE agents "'access to any city data or information that can be used to determine or trace a person's citizenship or immigration status,'" the [lawsuit notes](#).

The ordinance contains an "urgency clause," the lawsuit says, "which admits that the purpose of the law is to thwart the 'incoming federal administration.'"

Last, the city administrator banned federal immigration agents from public buildings not open to the general public unless the agents present a warrant.

The lawsuit then details open efforts to obstruct federal immigration enforcement, notably during the riots in early June.

On June 10 at a City Council meeting, the complaint alleges, "Councilmember Imelda Padilla asked the [Police Chief Jim McDonnell] to undermine federal enforcement actions by warning the City Council of any impending raids. Chief McDonnell correctly identified that request for what it was: 'obstruction of justice.'" At the same meeting, Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson uttered the following about federal immigration agents:



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If we know somebody is coming here to do warrantless abductions of the residents of this city, those are not our partners. ... I don't care what badge they have on or whose orders they're under. They're not our partners.

## Supremacy Clause

The city's sanctuary law and policies violate [8 U.S. Code 1373](#) and [1644](#), the suit avers. Both statutes forbid state and local governments from refusing to share information with federal immigration authorities.

The [lawsuit also alleges](#) three violations of the [Supremacy Clause](#) of the federal Constitution. That clause says that

This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof ... shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding

Count One alleges that the city's ordinance unlawfully preempts federal law because it blocks the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Count Two alleges "unlawful regulation of the federal government" because it trespasses the doctrine of intergovernmental immunity. Supremacy Clause precedent says "the activities of the Federal Government are free from regulation by any state."

Count Three alleges "unlawful discrimination against the federal government" because the city is "picking and choosing which federal criminal laws it will follow." The sanctuary ordinance also discriminates against ICE and Customs and Border Protection agents.

DOJ has also sued the following states and municipalities on the same or similar grounds:

- [Colorado and its capital, Denver](#);
- [New York and New York City](#); and,
- [Chicago, Cook County, and the state of Illinois](#).

Trump Administration is suing Denver over their new sanctuary city laws. Highlights include probation officers not being allowed to contact ICE when illegal aliens who served jail time are released back onto the streets. In fact, there is a \$50,000 fine for trying to notify ICE.

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— Insurrection Barbie (@DefiantlyFree) [May 4, 2025](#)



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