



Trump Administration: California “Bankrolling” Smuggling Operations

A Trump administration official accused the California state officials of “bankrolling” criminal human smuggling rings through their so-called sanctuary policies.

“We’re giving them a selling point,” said the official on March 12. “We’re lining their pockets. Sanctuary cities are bankrolling the very criminal organizations that can smuggle terrorists, that smuggle weapons, that smuggle drugs and have killed border patrol agents.”



Present Trump tweeted the following message on March 13:

California’s sanctuary policies are illegal and unconstitutional and put the safety and security of our entire nation at risk. Thousands of dangerous & violent criminal aliens are released as a result of sanctuary policies, set free to prey on innocent Americans. THIS MUST STOP!

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Speaking in San Diego the next day after reviewing prototypes of the wall that the president wants constructed along the U.S.-Mexican border, Trump thanked Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Acting Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan, and the Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Protection officers, and ICE agents — all of whom, he said, “are doing an amazing job.”

Trump spoke first about the border wall, saying that it is “truly our first line of defense, and it’s probably, if you think about it, our first and last, other than the great ICE agents and other people — moving people out.”

He then went on to talk about the need close the deadly loopholes exploited by smugglers and traffickers. Among those loopholes we have to confront, said Trump, are “the dangerous sanctuary cities, which you’ve been all hearing so much about.”

The president then spoke forcefully about California’s sanctuary city and sanctuary state policies:

California sanctuary policies put the entire nation at risk. They’re the best friend of the criminal. That’s what exactly is happening. The criminals take refuge in these sanctuary cities, and it’s very dangerous for our police and enforcement folks.

The smugglers, the traffickers, the gang members, they’re all taking refuge, and I think a lot of people in California understand that. A lot of people from a lot of other places understand it, and they don’t want sanctuary cities.

These policies release dangerous criminal offenders to prey on innocent people and nullify the federal law. They’re threatening the security and the safety of the people of our country. In the upcoming omnibus budget bill, Congress must fund the border wall and prohibit grants to



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sanctuary jurisdictions that threaten the security of our country and the people of our country. We must enforce our laws and protect our people.

A statement posted on the White House website on March 13 provided an explanation of what sanctuary cities are, noting that the term “sanctuary cities” generally refers to jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate with lawful Federal immigration enforcement efforts, by rejecting immigration “detainer” requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It stated that when local law enforcement arrests an illegal alien on criminal charges, ICE issues a detainer, which is a request that the local authority notify ICE before releasing the alien and maintain custody for a short time so that ICE may take custody for removal purposes. It explained that sanctuary jurisdictions, including many big cities, refuse to comply with ICE’s detainer requests.

The White House statement continued:

Sanctuary cities are preventing Federal authorities from locating and arresting dangerous criminal aliens and removing them from our country. Sanctuary policies in California have allowed the release of numerous criminal aliens charged with serious crimes who could continue to harm communities.

The *Sacramento Bee* reported on March 13 that the Trump administration filed a suit against California last week, challenging a new state law that restricts how and when state law enforcement can interact with federal immigration authorities. We reported on that lawsuit on March 8, noting that an item posted on the White House website that day stated that two evenings earlier, the Department of Justice had filed a lawsuit against the State of California “to save lives and keep dangerous criminal aliens off our streets.” The message continued by saying: “For far too long, California has obstructed Federal law and put the interests of criminal aliens ahead of the well-being of American citizens.”

Attorney General Jeff Sessions delivered a speech at a gathering of the California Peace Officers Association in Sacramento on March 7, during which he denounced officials who support so-called sanctuary city policies, describing them as “extremists” promoting “open borders.”

Sessions had harsh words in particular for Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, who issued a public warning on Twitter on the night of February 24 that immigration raids in her city were upcoming. “[Schaaf’s] actions support those who flout our laws and boldly validates illegality,” Sessions said. “There’s no other way to interpret those remarks.”

“So here’s my message to Mayor Schaaf: How dare you?” Sessions continued. “How dare you needlessly endanger the lives of law enforcement to promote an open borders agenda.”

Prior to that, ICE acting director Thomas Homan, speaking on *Fox & Friends* on February 28, said that Schaaf’s public warning that immigration raids were imminent was “beyond the pale.” He continued: “What [Schaaf] did is no better than a gang lookout yelling ‘police’ when a police cruiser comes in the neighborhood, except she did it to a whole community.”

We can expect the battle between the Trump administration and California to continue, since the prevailing pro-sanctuary politicians running most of the Golden State’s jurisdiction show no signs of backing down on this important issue.

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