
Comment on Welcoming Community Policy

1 message

'leharvey@comcast.net' via Select Board <selectboard@natickma.org>

Mon, Nov 25, 2024 at 6:38 PM

Reply-To: "leharvey@comcast.net" <leharvey@comcast.net>

To: selectboard@natickma.org

Dear Select Board,

You can call it Welcoming Community Policy but it's clear it's a sanctuary city policy you are proposing. So that's why I refer to it that way below. Even the Boston news stations and newspapers are referring to it as Natick is seeking to have a Sanctuary City Policy so that's how it will be viewed and used if you decide to pass it.

In recent years, the debate over sanctuary city policies has become a flashpoint in the national conversation on immigration. Sanctuary cities, which limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation, have drawn both fierce support and passionate opposition. While proponents argue that these policies are compassionate and necessary for protecting vulnerable populations, there are several compelling reasons why sanctuary city policies should be reconsidered or repealed.

1. Undermining the Rule of Law

The foundation of any stable society is the rule of law. Sanctuary cities, by actively resisting federal immigration enforcement, create a dangerous precedent of selectively adhering to the law. Immigration laws are passed by elected representatives and should be enforced consistently and equally across all jurisdictions. By allowing local governments to ignore federal immigration policies, sanctuary cities undermine the authority of the federal government and erode trust in the legal system. When cities choose which laws to follow and which to ignore, it sends a message that laws are negotiable based on political preferences, weakening the overall integrity of the legal framework.

2. Public Safety Concerns

One of the most significant criticisms of sanctuary cities is the potential negative impact on public safety. Local police are often placed in a difficult position when they are prohibited from sharing information with federal authorities about the immigration status of individuals who may be involved in criminal activity. In many cases, sanctuary city policies have led to the release of individuals who have been charged with serious crimes, allowing them to remain in the community rather than being deported. This can pose a direct threat to public safety.

For example, studies have shown that sanctuary policies may result in the release of individuals with a history of violent crimes or repeated offenses, thereby increasing the risk of further harm to local communities. Cities should not prioritize the protection of individuals who have broken the law over the safety and well-being of their residents.

3. Strain on Local Resources

Sanctuary cities often attract immigrants, both legal and undocumented, with the promise of greater protection and access to public services. While this may seem compassionate on the surface, it can place a considerable strain on local resources, including public health services, education, and law enforcement. Cities that adopt sanctuary policies often experience a greater burden on social services, as they may see an influx of individuals seeking protection from deportation. This can lead to overcrowded schools, increased demand for healthcare services, and added pressure on local police forces. It is not sustainable for municipalities to shoulder the cost of illegal immigration without proper federal support.

Moreover, this burden disproportionately affects taxpayers who may not benefit from these policies. Local residents should not be forced to fund services for individuals who are in the country illegally, especially when they may not have had a say in these policies.

4. Encouraging Illegal Immigration

Sanctuary cities, by offering protection from federal immigration enforcement, inadvertently incentivize illegal immigration. By offering sanctuary, these cities send a message that there are certain places in the United States where undocumented immigrants can expect to live without fear of deportation. This can encourage more individuals to enter the country illegally, contributing to an already complex and overwhelmed immigration system.

While advocates argue that sanctuary policies provide necessary protections for vulnerable individuals, the reality is that these policies often reward illegal behavior rather than incentivizing individuals to pursue legal and structured immigration avenues. By not holding people accountable for violating immigration laws, sanctuary cities only exacerbate the problem of illegal immigration and discourage reforms to fix the broken immigration system.

5. Disregard for Victims of Crime

While sanctuary cities purport to protect immigrants, they often fail to consider the rights of crime victims—many of whom are legal residents or U.S. citizens. In cases where undocumented immigrants commit crimes, sanctuary policies can make it more difficult for victims to pursue justice, particularly when those criminals are shielded from federal authorities.

By providing safe harbor to criminals, sanctuary cities undermine the rights of victims who have been harmed by individuals who should be deported or prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Victims, especially those in marginalized communities, may feel reluctant to report crimes, fearing that they will be dragged into the immigration enforcement process themselves. This creates a chilling effect that discourages cooperation with law enforcement and impedes the pursuit of justice.

6. The Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The core issue behind the rise of sanctuary cities is a broken immigration system that needs comprehensive reform. Rather than allowing individual cities to create ad hoc policies, the solution lies in federal immigration reform that addresses the root causes of illegal immigration and provides a clear, legal pathway for those who wish to enter the United States. Sanctuary cities, while they may offer temporary relief for some, are not a sustainable or responsible solution. They do not address the systemic issues and can exacerbate the challenges we face as a nation.

Conclusion

While sanctuary cities are well-intentioned, they create a host of unintended consequences that ultimately harm the very people they are designed to protect. By undermining the rule of law, endangering public safety, straining local resources, and encouraging illegal immigration, these policies may do more harm than good. Instead of sanctuary cities, we need comprehensive immigration reform that respects the law, protects citizens, and offers fair treatment to immigrants who wish to live and work in the United States legally. The path forward lies not in sanctuary policies but in a more structured and humane approach to immigration that balances compassion with the need for order and security.

Sincerely,

Lynne Harvey
Natick Resident