



CHIRLA
Coalition for Humane
Immigrant Rights



March 29, 2017

Sheriff James McDonnell
Los Angeles County Sheriff
Hall of Justice
211 W. Temple St. FL 8
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Sheriff McDonnell:

We would like to thank you for meeting with us last week to discuss Senate Bill 54 (SB 54), authored by Senate President pro Tempore Kevin De León. As leaders representing faith, labor, and immigrant communities, we consider ourselves stewards of our communities' trust, power, and well being. It was in this spirit that we shared with you our deep concerns about your opposition to SB 54 -- and our hope that you will support the legislation or cease to oppose the bill. We appreciate your concern for public safety and public trust and believe that the most effective and moral path forward to ensure the safety of *all* of our diverse communities in Los Angeles is for us to work in partnership to support SB 54.

Our concerns can be summarized into three main points:

- Leaders like yourself are either part of the solution or adding to the growing problem with ICE. Your opposition to SB 54 creates confusion, misperception, and distance between local law enforcement and community.

- Your argument that ICE will raid y/our people if you do not hand some of them over is a false choice that also reinforces the need for SB 54 given that this argument acknowledges y/our inability to control ICE.
- We believe all people have the same right and ability to rehabilitate. If you agree, then you should not subject y/our immigrant neighbors to double suspicion, double punishment, and less due process than citizens.

At this Critical Time When Immigrant Families Are Under Attack, California Must Go Beyond the Trust and Truth Acts

While the Trust Act and Truth Act are critical to protecting immigrant families by providing clear guidance to law enforcement, these statutes do not adequately address the unprecedented attack by the current federal administration. It is imperative that California protect immigrant communities – especially in Los Angeles, which has more immigrants than any other region in the country -- by enacting SB 54. This is clearly the will of LA County voters.

On January 25, 2017, President Trump issued an executive order dubbed “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States.” This directive has changed the landscape and requires additional action by the California State Legislature. The president’s executive action amplifies interior immigration enforcement, threatens to defund “Sanctuary Cities,” resurrects the Secure Communities Program (S-Comm), and makes virtually all potentially removable immigrants enforcement priorities. The *Los Angeles Times* estimates that the new enforcement priorities may impact as many as 8 million immigrants.¹

Communication & Partnership with Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

One of your concerns about SB 54 is that it limits collaboration and/or communication with federal immigration authorities. However, as we have seen with the controversial S-Comm and 287(g) programs, collaboration between local law enforcement and DHS undermines community trust, burdens local resources, and separates families. For these reasons, SB 54 “prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies, including school police and security departments, from using resources to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest persons for immigration enforcement purposes.” SB 54 would not prohibit local law enforcement collaboration with federal immigration authorities to engage in joint taskforces so long as the primary purpose is not immigration enforcement. Furthermore, the bill has been amended to allow for notification to the federal government regarding release dates and names when individuals with past violent felony convictions are released.

SB 54 (De Leon) Makes Public Safety a Priority

One of the concerns that you voiced is that if ICE cannot pick up immigrants from jails, they threaten to go into communities and detain people, making immigrants less likely to report crimes and leading to more family separation through deportations. The fact is that ICE has

¹ <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-deportations-20170204-story.html>

already been conducting raids in Southern California, even prior to the introduction of SB 54. Furthermore, we are troubled that ICE is using local and state governments to enforce their agenda instead of implementing best practices to safeguard local residents. We must take a stand against both ICE's efforts to burden local law enforcement with immigration enforcement and ICE raids. Both harm our communities. The key to preserving and strengthening trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement in California is to pass and implement SB 54.

A report by the University of Illinois published in 2013 found that "70 percent of undocumented immigrants reported they are less likely to contact law enforcement authorities if they were victims of a crime."² Furthermore, according to the Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Chief of Police Charlie Beck has stated that "sexual assault reports have dropped 25% among the city's Latino population since the beginning of 2017 compared with the same period last year, adding that reports of domestic violence have fallen by 10%. Similar decreases were not seen in reports of those crimes by other ethnic groups."³

In 2015, former President Barack Obama created the Task Force on 21st Century Policing to create recommendations to strengthen policing models and increase public safety. One recommendation was to "decouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing."⁴ SB 54 (De Leon) strikes the right balance and would help to preserve the hard-won trust between immigrants and local law enforcement.

We appreciate your time, and we respectfully request that, if you cannot support it, you cease your active opposition to SB 54. Now is the time to stand on the right side of history by standing with immigrant communities. We look forward to your response and to continued dialogue on these important matters of public safety and public trust.

Sincerely,

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² http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/INSECURE_COMMUNITIES_REPORT_FINAL.PDF

³ <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-immigrant-crime-reporting-drops-20170321-story.html>

⁴ https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf

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cc: California Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León