

NHHLA National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

July 22, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NHHLA Opposition to H.R. 3009, Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act

Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHHLA), a coalition of 39 leading national Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, to strongly urge you to vote against H.R. 3009.

H.R. 3009 would withhold federal law enforcement funding for states and local jurisdictions, characterized as “sanctuary cities,” that limit interaction between federal immigration agencies and local law enforcement agencies in order to build trust in the community and promote local public safety goals. **NHHLA recommends a “no” vote on H.R. 3009, the Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act and any similar legislation. NHHLA will closely monitor any votes on them for inclusion in future NHHLA scorecards evaluating Member support for the Latino community.**

Such legislation, a misguided response to the tragic murder of an innocent woman in San Francisco, is based on sweeping generalizations about all immigrants based on the actions of one individual, thus scapegoating immigrants, and in particular Latino immigrants. It is unacceptable when a presidential contender such as Donald Trump makes such generalizations in campaigning and equally unacceptable when Members of Congress do so in legislating. No responsible public official should use this tragedy as a pretext for harsh and unproductive policies that only serve to satisfy the anti-immigrant impulses of certain politicians while doing nothing to improve public safety. The facts speak for themselves: numerous studies have shown that immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than native-born Americans, less likely to commit crimes, and less likely to be repeat offenders.

Though the case in San Francisco is tragic, no single occurrence should warrant such a wholesale change in policy, particularly with insufficient time to obtain all the facts and relevant policy considerations in relation to the case. Legislating based on scoring political points and ignoring the underlying problems of our immigration and criminal justice systems is not the solution. The federal government has implemented harsh immigration removal policies in the recent past, including unconstitutional detainer requests, that failed to promote public safety, instead tearing families apart by deporting individuals for minor nonviolent offenses and creating fear of authorities that undermined the cooperation that local law enforcement needs in order to protect the public.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
Avance Inc.
Casa de Esperanza
Cuban American National Council
Farmworker Justice
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Hispanic Publications
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispana Leadership Institute
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Puerto Rican Coalition
Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress – National
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S.- Mexico Foundation

In order to effectively address problems with our broken immigration system, Congress should resume the effort started in the 113th Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns. Please contact NHLA through Andrea Senteno, of MALDEF, at asenteno@maldef.org or 202-572-0467 with any questions regarding this letter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Saenz
MALDEF, President and General Counsel
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair



Jose Calderón
Hispanic Federation, President
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair