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33 Prominent Prosecutors and Police Sound Alarm on Justice Department’s Anti-Sanctuary Cities Stance Endangering Public Safety

In a new filing in Los Angeles’s lawsuit against AG Sessions, leading law enforcement leaders say DOJ is compromising public safety in pursuing misguided immigration enforcement policies

Thirty three prominent current and former prosecutors and law enforcement leaders, including District Attorneys, State’s Attorneys, Prosecuting Attorneys, Commonwealth’s Attorneys, Sheriffs, and Police Chiefs from **24 jurisdictions** representing **over 24 million people** around the country are challenging a Trump administration effort to entangle local police with federal immigration enforcement, saying it threatens community trust and endangers public safety.

These elected prosecutors and law enforcement officials came together in a friend-of-the-court (amicus) brief supporting a federal lawsuit by the city of Los Angeles against the Justice Department. The suit challenges the Justice Department’s decision to show preferential treatment in awarding grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services – a crucial resource for community policing – to cities that pledge to assist with federal immigration enforcement.

“Nearly four decades ago, the Los Angeles Police Department adopted pioneering [policies](#) recognizing that community trust is an essential foundation for effective policing,” said **Miriam Krinsky**, executive director of [Fair and Just Prosecution](#) and a signatory on the brief. “The Justice Department’s new approach – part of its broader effort to entangle local law enforcement in immigration enforcement – threatens to dismantle the critical bonds of trust that Los Angeles and many other cities have worked so hard to build. Public safety is predicated on preserving community trust and respect.”

Twenty current elected prosecutors from diverse parts of the nation and a wide range of jurisdictions signed onto the brief, including **District Attorneys Diana Becton** (Contra Costa County, CA), **Sherry Boston** (Decatur, GA), **Mark Dupree** (Kansas City, KS), **Stan Garnett** (Boulder, CO), **George Gascón** (San Francisco, CA), **Sim Gill** (Salt Lake City, UT), **Eric Gonzalez** (Brooklyn NY), **Mark Gonzalez** (Corpus Christi, TX), **John Hummel** (Bend, OR), **Lawrence Krasner** (Philadelphia, PA), **Beth McCann** (Denver, CO), **P. David Soares** (Albany, NY), and **Cy Vance** (New York, NY); **State’s Attorneys Kim Foxx** (Chicago, IL) and **Marilyn Mosby** (Baltimore, MD); **State Attorneys Aramis Ayala** (Orlando, FL) and **Andrew Warren** (Tampa, FL); **Prosecuting Attorneys Dan Satterberg** (Seattle, WA) and **Carol Siemon** (Lansing, MI); and Commonwealth’s Attorney **Stephanie Morales** (Portsmouth, VA). These elected prosecutors were joined by **ten law enforcement leaders** including **Police Chiefs Chris Magnus** (Tucson, AZ) and **Celestino Rivera** (Lorain, OH); **Sheriffs Jerry Clayton** (Ann Arbor, MI), **Bill McCarthy** (Des Moines, IA), and **Joseph Pelle** (Boulder, CO), as well as **former Police Chiefs Chris Burbank** (Salt Lake City, UT), **William Lansdowne** (San Diego, San Jose, and Richmond, CA), and **Brendan Cox** (Albany, NY); **former Superintendent Ronal Serpas** (New Orleans, LA); and **former Sheriff Michael Haley** (Reno, NV). Other signatories on the brief include **Roy L. Austin** (former Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity, White House Domestic Policy Council), **Chiraag Bains** (former Senior Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice), and **Miriam Aroni Krinsky** (former federal prosecutor and Executive Director, Fair and Just Prosecution).

The brief shows—contrary to a [recent statement](#) by Attorney General Sessions—how the Justice Department’s new policy undermines community policing efforts designed to build trust with immigrant populations. It draws on the firsthand experience of the brief’s signatories and recounts recent incidents showing that immigrant communities are less willing to report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement officers and prosecutors when they fear deportation.

“With this misguided policy, the Department of Justice is making local communities less safe and limiting the discretion of police departments across the country,” said **Ronal Serpas**, former Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department, Chief of Police in Nashville, TN, and Chief of the Washington State Patrol, and current Chair of Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration. “In my experience, the police officers who patrol the streets should be looked to for direction in those communities and are in the best position to know which policies will make their neighborhoods safe.”

The brief argues that public safety, sound police work, and successful prosecution depend on community trust and cooperation, which are undermined when undocumented immigrants fear that interacting with police and the criminal justice system could lead to deportation.

In turn, the brief warns that the Justice Department’s new policy, if allowed to stand, could result in a surge of crime against undocumented immigrants and would discourage them from cooperating as witnesses in criminal investigations.

The amicus brief was authored by the Chicago Law Firm of [Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym, Ltd.](#), in conjunction with [Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection](#) (ICAP). [Fair and Just Prosecution](#), a national network of newly elected prosecutors committed to change and innovation, coordinated the amicus effort. In November, the same organizations coordinated [an amicus brief on behalf of prosecutors and law enforcement leaders in support of a similar lawsuit filed by the State of California against the Justice Department](#).

“This brief amplifies critical voices on this issue: the voices of prosecutors and other law enforcement officials whose responsibility, day in and day out, is to keep our communities safe,” said [Joshua Geltzer](#), ICAP’s executive director and visiting professor at Georgetown Law. “When public servants like these say that a policy change is going to stand between them and the communities they’re charged with serving and protecting, we should listen to them.”

The new amicus brief is available [here](#).

For additional questions, or to speak with amici, please contact Miriam Krinsky at krinskym@krinsky.la or 818-416-5218 or Tanya Weinberg at Tanya.Weinberg@georgetown.edu or 202-577-7827.