



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

POLICE CHIEFS FROM NATION'S MAJOR CITIES OBJECT TO LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS REQUIRING LOCAL POLICE TO ENFORCE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAW

WASHINGTON – Changes proposed to S 744, the bipartisan Senate immigration bill, as well as the SAFE Act, an anti-immigrant bill that could head to the House floor in the coming weeks, would compel law enforcement officers to engage in immigration enforcement activities or risk losing funding. The proposals would also require that civil immigration status information be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. In contrast to these proposals, an amendment to reaffirm that immigration enforcement is solely a Federal responsibility is supported by law enforcement leaders. Below is a statement from the Major Cities Chiefs Association:

“Immigration is a federal policy issue between the United States government and other countries. Any immigration enforcement laws or practices should be nationally based, consistent, and federally funded.

“Any Congressional action that would require state and local law enforcement agencies to engage in immigration enforcement is strongly opposed by the Major Cities Chiefs. These proposals would undermine the trust and cooperation between police officers and immigrant communities, which are essential elements of community-oriented policing. Such measures would result in fear and distrust of local police, damaging our efforts to prevent crime and weakening our ability to apprehend those who prey upon the public. Moreover, they would divert scarce and critical resources away from the core mission of local police – to create safer communities. And the complexity of immigration law, combined with the lack of adequate training and resources, increases the risk of civil liability for local police departments if they were tasked with enforcing immigration law.

“That is why we oppose the SAFE Act and similar measures being offered in the Senate such as Senator Sessions’ Amendment 1334. These proposals attempt to force police officers to perform the duties of immigration agents through the threat of sanctions and the withholding of existing funding. This is a misguided approach and will make all of our communities less safe. Instead of diverting resources away from fighting crime, Congress should reaffirm that immigration enforcement is solely a Federal responsibility. We applaud Senator Cardin and support his amendment (1265) together with other measures in the Senate and House that place the responsibility for immigration enforcement where it belongs – with the Federal government.

“Major Cities Chiefs support Congress’ effort to reform our broken immigration system and urges legislators to pass commonsense reform that makes the federal government, not our states or cities, responsible for this national policy.

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