

April 5, 2025

To the Members of the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

I am writing today to demand that you OPPOSE SB 71-FN. This so-called “anti-sanctuary” bill was amended to authorize county corrections facilities to hold individuals subject to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention for up to 48 hours following the resolution of their state charges (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays), in order to permit assumption of custody by ICE. Furthermore, it requires any agency refusing to honor an immigration detainer for an inmate to report each such refusal to the attorney general. SB 71 would also levy a 25% fine from state funds to municipalities that honor welcoming ordinances and violate this mandate.

In plainer language: This bill is just another step forward in our state’s cruel and misguided crusade against immigrants. By stoking fear and further entrenching collaboration with ICE (along with seeking to punish communities that resist doing so), it makes our state a less-welcoming place for immigrants — and for the rest of us.

I understand that many state legislators and Gov. Ayotte want New Hampshire’s law-enforcement agencies to fully cooperate with ICE. As justification for this position, Gov. Ayotte stated in her press release on the subject that “criminals who are in our country illegally and pose a danger should be apprehended and removed.” This bill is a piece of the machine that makes this so.

Taken at face value, the Governor’s statement sounds reasonable; but it obfuscates the fact that most undocumented people are not criminals. Nevertheless, they too will be dehumanized, detained, and deported by the dragnet willed into being by this bill, and others like it — which is the real goal of Ayotte, Trump (an *actual* convicted criminal), and far too many of our state legislators, all of whom regularly use marginalized people as political pawns.

Despite the worst intentions of many of the people in this Capitol building, we’re never going to deport thousands of violent illegal immigrants because it’s a problem that simply does not exist. This is because immigrants historically commit crimes at much lower rates than US-born American citizens. This fact is independent of one’s legal status; in fact, a study reported in the journal *Criminology* found that “increased concentrations of undocumented immigrants are associated with statistically significant *decreases* in violent crime” (*Criminology* 56(2), 370-401; emphasis mine). In other words, communities with undocumented people are safer than communities without them.

Do not be fooled into thinking that immigrants, legal or not, are your enemy. Do not be fooled into thinking that New Hampshire’s safety is the goal of any of the spiteful and cowardly sponsors of this bill. If it were, they would be welcoming immigrants to our state, not scapegoating them; nor would they seek to punish those of us who see immigrants for what they really are: people, just like us, who are worthy of welcome.

Cruelty is the goal here. It always has been.

In unequivocal solidarity with New Hampshire’s immigrant community,

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Source: <https://www.factcheck.org/2018/06/is-illegal-immigration-linked-to-more-or-less-crime/>