



FIVE STEPS OUR LEADERS SHOULD TAKE TO PROTECT IMMIGRANT OREGONIANS

LEADERS URGED TO BACK UP SUPPORT FOR “SANCTUARY” STATUS WITH ACTION

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PORTLAND, Ore. – Advocacy organizations are calling on Oregon’s state and local leaders to act swiftly to reduce the impact of an apparent recent increase in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity. The American Civil Liberties Union, (ACLU of Oregon), and the Oregon Justice Resource Center are urging justice system stakeholders, elected officials, and law enforcement agencies to put in place measures that will protect families.

“We’ve heard a lot in recent weeks about claims of an uptick in ICE enforcement activity, cooperation between local law enforcement officers and ICE agents, and action being taken against people who have not been convicted of a crime,” said Alice Lundell, Director of Communication for Oregon Justice Resource Center. “Separating the truth from the rumors is not easy, but what is clear is that our elected representatives and stakeholders in our justice system must do more than offer stock phrases about sanctuary.”

The Oregon Justice Resource Center and the ACLU of Oregon are urging stakeholders including elected officials, law enforcement, and the courts to follow five practices. This will help to ensure state law is obeyed and minor offenses do not result in the breakup of Oregon families:

- Uphold existing state law forbidding local law enforcement from acting on federal immigration laws
- Refuse to execute warrants for arrest based on immigration status
- Avoid the unnecessary disclosure of immigration status by the justice system
- Reduce the impact of criminal convictions on immigration status through statutory reform
- End “broken windows policing” targeting low-level offenders.

The ACLU and the Oregon Justice Resource Center are concerned about the potential chilling effect more aggressive ICE enforcement activity may have on whole communities' willingness to interact with the justice system, regardless of whether a particular individual is an immigrant or not.

"It's critical to the safety of all Oregonians that people are prepared to engage with our justice system, whether as victims, witnesses, defendants or otherwise," said David Rogers, Executive Director of the ACLU of Oregon. "If people perceive that the risk of attending court is too great, they may stay away. This would allow victims to remain in danger, defendants to be punished twice for failing to appear, and people to be generally less willing to contact and cooperate with law enforcement when they have a problem. That raises a serious public safety concern for everyone in our community."

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For more information or interviews, please contact Alice Lundell, Director of Communication for Oregon Justice Resource Center.