

SB 5497 / HB 1815 KEEP WASHINGTON WORKING



Prime Sponsors:
Senator Wellman (D- LD 41)
Representative Ortiz-Self (D- LD 21)

Background

Nearly one million Washingtonians – one in every seven people in this state – are immigrants, and they are an integral part of our communities and workforce. However, the federal government has made mass deportation a priority, increasing enforcement of civil immigration law by 40 percent.

Washington law enforcement exists to keep people in Washington safe. Federal government agencies should not be allowed to commandeer our state's scarce public safety resources. When local law enforcement agencies do the work of federal immigration authorities, it is dangerous overreach that subjects people of color to discriminatory racial profiling and harassment. It also diminishes public safety, wastes taxpayer dollars, and damages Washington's economy.

The Keep Washington Working Act (KWW) protects the privacy and civil rights of Washington residents by prohibiting local law enforcement from questioning about immigration status, notifying ICE that a noncitizen is in custody, and detaining someone for civil immigration enforcement.

Promote Public Safety

Immigration enforcement commonly targets individuals who pose no threat to public safety. In the first three months of 2017, ICE arrested over 5,000 noncitizens without any criminal history. A study of police officers from across the country and across the political spectrum found that local enforcement of federal immigration laws resulted in an increase in racial profiling, increased fear in immigrant communities, and the undermining of trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. When local police are viewed as an extension of the immigration system, noncitizens are less likely to report crime or appear as witnesses, making us all less safe.

Protect our State's Taxpayers

The federal government does not reimburse the costs of local resources used to collaborate in immigration enforcement. Expending scarce local public safety resources compromises the ability of local governments to meet the needs of their community. Additionally, such enforcement exposes a jurisdiction to costly litigation.

Defend Washington's Economy

A recent study, analyzing the federal government's own data, showed positive outcomes in jurisdictions that do not enforce immigration laws. Jurisdictions that choose not to hold people for ICE have lower rates of crime, poverty, and unemployment. In addition to a safer community, these reflect the economic benefits of law enforcement building trust in local communities.



WASHINGTON IMMIGRANT
SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

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