

Statement in response to 16 Oregon Sheriffs backing anti-immigrant, racial profiling ballot measure

**08/27/2018**

“We are deeply troubled that elected officials continue to perpetuate the myth of the criminal immigrant. Studies have shown, repeatedly, that immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than native-born citizens.<sup>1</sup> There is no factual basis for the assertion that a *civil* immigration violation leads to a life of crime. Sheriff Bergin’s statement not only ignores facts and statistics, but it also relies on tired, fear-mongering rhetoric that misleads the public on how the law works.

“Sheriff Bergin suggests that the sanctuary statute somehow prevents local law enforcement from pursuing immigrants who commit state crimes. Again, the law only addresses civil immigration violations, not state or federal crimes.

“Sheriff Bergin complains about the ‘strain on the system’ local jails experience when booking immigrants accused for crimes, while in the same breath calling for increased use of local resources to enforce federal law. By casually disregarding racial profiling by law enforcement, Sheriff Bergin dismisses the experiences of many immigrants and Oregonians of color. It only takes a quick internet search to find cases of ICE deporting noncitizens who called the police for help.<sup>2</sup> If Measure 105 passes, people of color will, once again, bear the brunt of the fallout. Just ask Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

“For more than 30 years, Oregon’s sanctuary law has worked in the interest of public safety, to prevent racial profiling, and to protect law enforcement from liability. This letter signed by the 16 sheriffs is nothing short of open hostility towards communities of color, immigrants, and non-citizens. As Oregonians, we should reject such fear based rhetoric and myths, and support policies grounded in facts, dignity, and compassion.”

*Statement to be attributed to Erin McKee, Co- Director, Immigrant Rights Project, Oregon Justice Resource Center.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Flagg, A. (2018, March 30). The myth of the criminal immigrant. The New York Times Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/27/upshot/crime-immigration-myth.html>; Adelman, R., et al. (2016). Urban crime rates and the changing face of immigration: evidence across four decades. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 15 (1), 52-77.

<sup>2</sup> See Silva, D. (2018, Feb. 13). Immigrant faces deportation after calling police for help. ABC News Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/immigrant-faces-deportation-after-calling-police-help-n847801>