

How Sanctuary Cities Enable Benefit Fraud



Written by [Matt O'Brien](#) on January 5, 2026

applicable legal norms force the system to the verge of collapse.

In a nutshell, sanctuary policies are nothing more than cities, counties, or states [unilaterally declaring](#) themselves exempt from federal immigration laws that they do not like. In our federalist system, this kind of unilateral action is not permissible. Cities, counties, and states exempting themselves from immigration law is absolutely no different than South Carolina attempting to secede from the Union over the abolition of slavery. Duly enacted federal laws are binding on all political subdivisions within our federalist system, even when a particular jurisdiction disapproves. And the process for changing a federal law that a city, county, or state disapproves of is to petition Congress to change the law, not to simply ignore the disliked provision.

The end result of sanctuary policies is that foreign nationals residing in these jurisdictions receive a “get-out-of-jail-free” card for virtually any crime. Inevitably, local authorities begin refusing to cooperate with the federal government in enforcing *any* federal laws that touch on immigration in any way. And state enforcement entities tend to shy away from cases where the primary suspects are illegal aliens — who are, paradoxically, treated as a privileged class.

The situation only becomes more problematic when one or more of the groups of privileged foreign nationals gain political power. Nobody in the Department of Homeland Security or the FBI wanted to investigate allegations that [Ilhan Omar married her brother](#) to get him a green card, because she was an up-and-coming star in the Democratic Party. And nobody in Minnesota wanted to pursue the obvious indicators of massive fraud among the Somali migrant community because that community was a source of both political contributions and votes. Political machines holding power are rarely willing to bite the hand that feeds them.

Accordingly, no one should be surprised that a migrant community in a radical sanctuary jurisdiction became involved in a massive fraud scheme. Because, for decades, Minnesota has been [telling its migrant communities](#) that it is perfectly acceptable to violate any laws that one doesn't like. Because, as any parent, teacher, coach, or youth leader knows, if you encourage bad behavior, you just get more bad behavior. And for lack of a better metaphor, sanctuary policies are the gateway drug that leads to the complete disobedience of any laws that prove inconvenient to migrant groups.

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