



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 15, 2025

Bondi to Sanctuaries: You Must Confirm You Are Complying With Federal Immigration Laws

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi has put sanctuary jurisdictions nationwide on notice that they had better comply with federal immigration statutes or face the consequences.

Thirty-two cities, states, and counties have until August 19 to confirm their commitment to complying with federal law. Otherwise, she wrote, they can “see us in court.”

Two weeks ago, the Justice Department (DOJ) published a list of sanctuary jurisdictions that are refusing to comply with federal immigration statutes.

Bondi’s letter continues the lawfare, which includes lawsuits against sanctuaries, that the Trump administration is waging to stop rebel jurisdictions from flouting federal immigration laws.



AP Images
Pam Bondi

Any sanctuary jurisdiction that continues to put illegal aliens ahead of American citizens can either come to the table or see us in court.

Today [@TheJusticeDept](#) delivered demand letters to sanctuary cities, counties, and states — a key step in our strategic effort to eradicate... pic.twitter.com/aKWNCY4hJN

— Attorney General Pamela Bondi (@AGPamBondi) [August 14, 2025](#)

The Letter

Noting that Congress “has Congress has codified the duty of states and local governments to cooperate in immigration enforcement efforts,” [Bondi wrote](#) that far-left sanctuary jurisdictions “have undermined” that partnership and openly “obstructed federal immigration enforcement, giving aliens cover to perpetrate crimes in our communities and evade the immigration consequences that federal law requires.”

On April 28, Bondi continued, in an executive order titled “Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens,” [President Trump ordered](#) the attorney general and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to identify and publish a list of sanctuary cities. In keeping with that order, Bondi told the sanctuary officials that she is:

committed to identifying state and local laws, policies, and practices that facilitate violations of federal immigration laws or impede lawful federal immigration operations, and taking



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legal action to challenge such laws, policies, or practices.

As well, “individuals operating under the color of law, using their official position to obstruct federal immigration enforcement efforts and facilitating or inducing illegal immigration may be subject to criminal charges.”

Those charged are subject to prosecution for trespassing the following statutes:

- [8 U.S. Code 1324](#), Bringing in and harboring aliens;
- [18 U.S. Code 371](#), Conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud United States;
- [18 U.S. Code 1071](#), Concealing person from arrest;
- [18 U.S. Code 1505](#), Obstruction of proceedings before departments, agencies, and committees; and/or
- [8 U.S. Code 1373](#), Communication between government agencies and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

“This ends now,” [Bondi wrote](#).



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

August 13, 2025

Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
c/o David B. Sapp, Legal Affairs Secretary
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

The United States has a long history of cooperation with state and local law enforcement agencies, including for immigration enforcement. Such cooperation is vital to enforce federal law and protect national security. Recognizing that need, Congress has codified the duty of states and local governments to cooperate in immigration enforcement efforts.

For too long, so-called sanctuary jurisdiction policies have undermined this necessary cooperation and obstructed federal immigration enforcement, giving aliens cover to perpetrate crimes in our communities and evade the immigration consequences that federal law requires.

Under President Trump's leadership, full cooperation by state and local governments in immigration enforcement efforts is a top priority. To ensure such cooperation, the President has directed the Attorney General of the United States, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security, to identify sanctuary jurisdictions and notify them of their unlawful sanctuary status and potential violations of federal law. Additionally, the President directed federal agencies to identify and evaluate their statutory authority to issue grants, contracts, and federal funds, to determine where immigration-related terms and conditions may be added to combat sanctuary policies that violate federal immigration law. *See* Executive Order 14,287, *Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens*, 90 Fed. Reg. 18761 (April 28, 2025). As contemplated by the Executive Order, designation as a sanctuary jurisdiction may result in additional consequences and further agency actions as permitted by law. *See id.*

As the chief law enforcement officer of the United States, I am committed to identifying state and local laws, policies, and practices that facilitate violations of federal immigration laws or impede lawful federal immigration operations, and taking legal action to challenge such laws, policies, or practices. Individuals operating under the color of law, using their official position to obstruct federal immigration enforcement efforts and facilitating or inducing illegal immigration may be subject to criminal charges. As such, I have instructed that all litigating components of the Department and each U.S. Attorney's Office shall investigate incidents involving any such potential unlawful conduct and shall, where supported by the evidence, prosecute violations of federal laws such as 8 U.S.C. § 1324, 18 U.S.C. § 371, 18 U.S.C. § 1071, and 18 U.S.C. § 1505. State and local entities, particularly those with policies in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1373 and



Letter to Gavin Newsom
Governor of California

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§ 1644, may also be subject to civil liability.

Further, pursuant to President Trump's directive in Executive Order 14,287, the Department has compiled a list of sanctuary jurisdictions.¹ This list is based on a review of laws, policies, and practices of the identified jurisdictions.

You are hereby notified that your jurisdiction has been identified as one that engages in sanctuary policies and practices that thwart federal immigration enforcement to the detriment of the interests of the United States. This ends now. By Tuesday, August 19, 2025, please submit a response to this letter that confirms your commitment to complying with federal law and identifies the immediate initiatives you are taking to eliminate laws, policies, and practices that impede federal immigration enforcement. This letter does not constitute final agency action and nothing in this letter creates any right or benefit enforceable at law against the United States.

Sincerely,

Pamela Bondi
Attorney General

cc: Rob Bonta
California Attorney General
455 Golden Gate Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/us-sanctuary-jurisdiction-list-following-executive-order-14287-protecting-american-communities>



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immigration law. They must identify “the immediate initiatives [they] are taking to eliminate laws, policies, and practices that impede federal immigration enforcement.”

Recipients

Among the renegades who received the letter are Governors Gavin Newsom of California, Jared Polis of Colorado, Ned Lamont of Connecticut, J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, Tim Walz of Minnesota, and Kathy Hochul of New York.

City and county officials include Cook County, Illinois, Board President Toni Preckwinkle; San Diego County Board Chairman Terra Lawson-Remer; Albuquerque, New Mexico, Mayor Tim Keller; and Boston, Massachusetts, Mayor Michelle Wu.

“Any sanctuary jurisdiction that continues to put illegal aliens ahead of American citizens can either come to the table or see us in court,” Bondi wrote on X.

Previous Warnings

Border czar Tom Homan has repeatedly warned sanctuary officials they would be prosecuted [under the harboring statute](#). “They need to educate themselves,” [he told](#) Fox News of the sanctuary officials:

They need to review this. Title 8, United States Code 1324 III. Read about that and don’t cross that line because it is a felony to harbor and conceal an illegal alien from [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]. Read the statute. Don’t cross that line.

In January, former Deputy Attorney General [Emil Bove](#), recently confirmed to sit on the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, [also warned](#) that DOJ would prosecute mulish sanctuary officials.

In a memorandum to DOJ employees, he wrote that the Supremacy Clause requires state and local officials “to comply with the Executive Branch’s [constitutional] immigration enforcement initiatives.”

[He continued](#):

Federal law prohibits state and local actors from resisting, obstructing, and otherwise failing to comply with lawful immigration-related commands and requests pursuant to, for example, the President’s extensive Article II authority with respect to foreign affairs and national security, the Immigration and Nationality Act, and the Alien Enemies Act.

Thus, U.S. attorneys, he warned, will investigate “for potential prosecution” officials who defy the federal immigration laws that Bondi mentioned in her letter.

Lawsuits

Since January 20, DOJ has filed myriad Supremacy Clause lawsuits to overturn unlawful sanctuary policies. So far, the administration has sued [Los Angeles](#); Denver and Colorado; [New York](#) and [New York City](#); and [Chicago](#), Cook County, and the state of Illinois.

Today marks the end of a longstanding exploitation of Oklahoma taxpayers, who for many years have subsidized colleges and universities as they provide unlawful benefits to illegal immigrants in the form of in-state tuition. I have partnered with the Trump Administration



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to ensure... pic.twitter.com/fQlvFq5Zc2

— Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond (@Okla_OAG) [August 5, 2025](#)

And early this month, [DOJ sued](#) Oklahoma and its board of education to block the state from giving illegal aliens in-state tuition, a violation of federal law that says “an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State ... for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit ... without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident.”



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