



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on November 28, 2017

## Under 287(g) Program, Local Police Support Immigration Enforcement

While many cities (and even the state of California) have proclaimed “sanctuary” status — i.e., they are refusing to cooperate with federal immigration authorities to identify illegal aliens in their custody — dozens of police departments across America have joined Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s 287(g) program, under which local police officers are deputized to enforce federal immigration laws.



A Reuters report of November 27 observed that since the beginning of the Trump administration, 29 additional police departments have joined the 287(g) program, doubling its size in 10 months. The news agency’s report cited Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for these figures and wrote that 38 police departments told Reuters in interviews that they have submitted applications for the program or are potentially interested in joining it.

The news agency analyzed population statistics of communities participating in the 287(g) program and compared them with so-called sanctuary cities and found that most communities whose police have joined, or are seeking to join, the program have relatively small populations, typically fewer than 100,000 residents, with small immigrant populations. In contrast, noted the report, the approximately three dozen “sanctuary cities” that have refused to cooperate with ICE immigration enforcement have a median population of half a million people and larger foreign-born populations.

An explanation of the program on the ICE website notes: “The 287(g) program, one of ICE’s top partnership initiatives, allows a state or local law enforcement entity to enter into a partnership with ICE, under a joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), in order to receive delegated authority for immigration enforcement within their jurisdictions.”

The ICE article noted that, currently, ICE has 287(g) agreements with 60 law-enforcement agencies in 18 states and that the agency has trained and certified more than 1,822 state and local officers to enforce immigration law.

In its report, Reuters contrasted Bensalem, Pennsylvania, a township of 60,000 people, with nearby Philadelphia, by quoting officials from both places.

Fred Harran, Bensalem’s director of public safety, said that any immigrant in the country illegally who commits a crime, even a misdemeanor such as shoplifting or possession of a small amount of drugs, should be considered for deportation, and therefore he welcomes help from ICE. “If deporting you out of this country when you commit a crime is a tool at my disposal, you are darn right I am going to use it,” Harran said.

In contrast, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross, Jr. said he wants immigrant residents to feel “comfortable” cooperating with authorities to solve crimes. “There’s no way in the world that you would want to come forward as a source of information if you believe you are in jeopardy of being



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deported,” Reuters quoted Ross’s testimony at a court hearing in October. Philadelphia is among the municipalities suing the Trump administration because of its threats to cut federal funding to sanctuary cities.

In a November 28 article, the *Baltimore Sun* reported about the experience that the Harford County, Maryland, Sheriff’s Office has had while participating in the 287(g) program. Thirteen months after the Harford County Sheriff’s Office began checking the immigration status of the people it takes into custody, Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler issued a press release saying that implementing the program was “the right choice.”

The Sheriff’s Office reported that since initiating the program at its detention center, 105 individuals arrested on state charges were identified as requiring additional screening. Of those, 44 were identified as being in this country illegally and, therefore, a priority for federal deportation procedures. The illegal aliens were found to have been from many countries throughout the world, including El Salvador, Italy, Mexico, Kenya, Cuba, Vietnam, and Jamaica, reported the Sheriff’s Office.

“The stats speak for themselves,” Gahler said in the news release. “The decision for the Harford County Sheriff’s Office to take part in the 287(g) program was the right choice. Without question, adding this tool to our crime fighting tool belt helps protect Harford County residents. The ability to detain violent criminals and keep them from re-victimizing the citizens of Harford County is paramount. Without this program, violent criminals, including four members of a violent gang, could still be free and in our community.”

Of the 44 detained suspects, five were determined to be gang members, four of them members of the notoriously violent MS-13.



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