



CLATSOP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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RESTORE RESPECT FOR LAW: REPEAL OREGON'S ILLEGAL-IMMIGRANT SANCTUARY STATUTE

In my third-of-a-century in law enforcement -- which includes almost 14 years as Sheriff of Clatsop County -- the most important thing I've learned is this: Respect for the law, among citizens and noncitizens alike, is indispensable to a free society.

That's why I urge Oregonians, in November, to vote "yes" on Ballot Measure 105 and repeal the State's illegal-immigrant sanctuary statute.

The statute undermines respect for law in significant ways. It tells illegal immigrants that Oregon considers immigration-law violations so inconsequential as to be unworthy of police and sheriffs' attention. In doing so, it legitimizes those violations and encourages more. As well, the statute invites the contempt of U.S. citizens and legal residents, whom Oregon expects to, abide by all laws.

Certainly, immigration-law violations are federal offenses. But they are precursors to other crimes illegal immigrants routinely commit in their efforts to conceal their illegal presence -- crimes, like identity theft, that harm everyday Oregonians at the local level.

Such crimes are well within local police and sheriffs' purview. But Oregon's "hands off" sanctuary statute works to keep law enforcement from pursuing many of the people who commit them -- for the very reason that they are here illegally and innocent Oregonians, pay the price.

Most often the common intersection with illegal immigration and alleged criminals is your County Jail. This is an additional strain on the system which should not be happening in the first place. To have the ability to work with our federal partners would alleviate the inconsistency and stop the erosion and ineffectiveness of these sanctuary laws.

Mollie Tibbetts' recent murder has refocused attention on the violence and heartbreak illegal-immigrant criminals can visit on Americans and their families. Tibbetts' killer "was here because our government neglected its responsibility to keep him out," writes Agnes Gibboney (whose son, Ronald Da Silva, also was murdered by an illegal immigrant). Oregon's sanctuary statute not only compounds that neglect, but issues a de facto invitation to illegal immigrants to settle in our state.

Another pro-sanctuary argument is that the statute's repeal would make illegal immigrants afraid to report crimes. Oregon Sen. Michael Dembrow, for instance, has argued the statute is needed so if illegal immigrants "have to call the police . . . they don't have to worry about state law enforcement turning them in" to U.S. authorities for deportation.

More nonsense. Can any sanctuary supporter, cite a single instance of an illegal immigrant being deported for reporting a crime? To the very best of my knowledge the answer is no and always has been. When people step forward to volunteer information about criminal activity, law-enforcement officers are not going to "look a gift horse in the mouth" by inquiring into their immigration status.

THOMAS J. BERGIN, SHERIFF

Criminal Division
503-325-8635

Support Division
503-325-8635

Corrections Division
503-325-8641

Parole & Probation
503-861-2875

Animal Control
503-861-7387

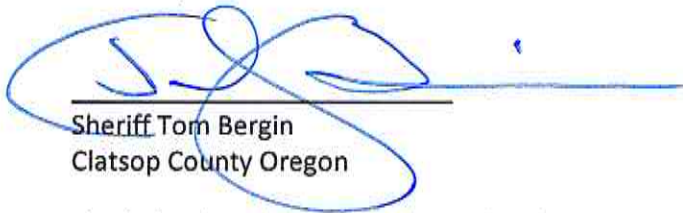
Certainly no prosecutor I've ever known would want to deport witnesses who could help them obtain convictions.

More, when they provide information that helps prosecute criminals, illegal immigrants can qualify for federally-issued nonimmigrant visas (the "S," "T," "U" and "VAWA" visas) or deferred action or parole. Illegal immigrants, without disclosing their identities, can easily report crimes via law-enforcement agencies' anonymous telephone and online "tip lines."

Last and most nonsensical and insulting of all to the men and women who have sworn to preserve the peace -- is the assertion that sanctuary repeal would unleash a wave of profiling against Hispanics.

First, all across the State, law-enforcement officers undergo formal rigorous training which includes anti-profiling training. More importantly however is this: People who choose to devote their lives to law enforcement are people of uncommon integrity. From their first day on the job, when they raise their right hands and take the oath, they commit themselves to treat everyone equally under the law. This commitment is at the core of their professional being and informs all their professional actions. I can honestly say that I have never witnessed an instance of racial profiling from any of my deputies. They serve and protect all who need assistance regardless of race, origin or creed. Whatever the outcome of Ballot Measure 105, they -- and law-enforcement officers everywhere throughout Oregon -- will continue to do their jobs with integrity and don't believe for a minute, they won't!

In November, please join me in voting "yes" on Ballot Measure 105 to repeal the illegal-immigrant sanctuary law.



Sheriff Tom Bergin
Clatsop County Oregon

The below listed Sheriffs endorse the above statement:

- | | |
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| Gilliam | Sheriff Gary Bettencourt |
| Harney | Sheriff Dave Ward |
| Morrow | Sheriff Ken Matlack |
| Sherman | Sheriff Brad Lohrey |
| Umatilla | Sheriff Terry Rowan |
| Malheur | Sheriff Brian Wolfe |
| Douglas | Sheriff John Hanlin |
| Curry | Sheriff John Ward |
| Coos | Sheriff Craig Zanni |
| Klamath | Sheriff Chris Kaber |
| Union | Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen |
| Grant | Sheriff Glenn Palmer |
| Wheeler | Sheriff Chris Humphrey |
| Lake | Sheriff Mike Taylor |
| Deschutes | Sheriff Shane Nelson |