

Statement from the Sanctuary Long Beach Campaign - March 8, 2018

Since January 2017, the community involved in the [Sanctuary Long Beach campaign](#) has been consistent in advocating for a “sanctuary for all” policy to help prevent the deportation of immigrants. Immigrants are deeply rooted in the history and diversity of the Long Beach community. If our city is to reflect our values and respect what the [city council directed on September 19th, 2017](#), local law enforcement should not be helping to deport any immigrant residents. Despite members of our campaign working with a broad group of city staff including the Long Beach Police Department, the current proposal of the Long Beach Values Act falls short of this shared value.

Under the [current staff proposal of the Long Beach Values Act](#), immigrants are granted protections in that Long Beach agencies are prohibited from sharing immigrants’ personal information with ICE, notifying ICE of release dates, and transfers to ICE. As proposed, these protections would not be given to people with certain past convictions. These exceptions include people whose offenses were decades-old, and people who have long ago served their time and changed their lives. Assisting in their deportation based on the same offense is double-punishment, and undermines the Constitutional guarantee of Due Process.

The impact of this carve-out is inconsistent with our Long Beach values of diversity, progress, and inclusion as it disproportionately excludes the majority of the Cambodian refugee community, who is highly vulnerable to deportation. We strongly oppose these “carve-outs” due to the devastating impact they will have on the 20,000 members of the Cambodian community in Long Beach, the largest concentration of Cambodians outside of Southeast Asia.

Under the [Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996](#), Cambodian refugees, including those with green cards, are vulnerable to deportations for past convictions, even misdemeanors. As ICE and the Trump Administration continue to fast-track the deportation of “criminal immigrants,” the [Cambodian community nationally has become a major target](#). According to ICE, [1,900 Cambodians in the United States have deportation orders](#), with over 1,400 of these related to criminal convictions. This is the direct result of immigration policies that have created a higher standard for immigrants by reclassifying everyday common misdemeanors as aggravated felonies, making it easier to detain and deport Cambodians and other immigrant communities. The U.S. immigration system has created an uneven playing field that Long Beach should not perpetuate.

We also know that deportations do not only affect those deported. Someone may have a conviction from long ago, and now be a contributing member of society and provider for their family. We saw this exact situation two years ago when [CSULB Police helped deport Jose Alvarez due to a drug charge from 1995](#), leaving his six U.S.-born children without their father. Immigrants are parents and children, neighbors and workers, and every deportation sends waves of fear and suffering through our community as families are split apart.

We denounce this demonizing mischaracterization of immigrants who have a past conviction in the name of public safety. We believe in transformation and that no one should be separated from their family, and deported to a place they hardly know. It's time for Long Beach to be on the right side of history by passing a strong policy that fills the gaps in SB 54 and gets our local government fully out of the deportation business.

We call on the Long Beach City Council to pass a "clean" Long Beach Values Act with no "carve-outs" for past convictions and a fully-funded Deportation Defense Fund. No amount of political intimidation will deter us or silence our unwavering commitment to defend our values that make us proud to call Long Beach home.

May Day Long Beach Coalition's Sanctuary LB campaign:

Building Healthy Communities: Long Beach
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
Democratic Socialists of America - Long Beach chapter
Filipino Migrant Center
Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization
Housing Long Beach
Khmer Girls in Action
Long Beach Coalition for Good Jobs and a Healthy Community
Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition
Long Beach Residents Empowered
Long Beach Sacred Resistance
Long Beach United
National Immigration Law Center