

Statement from the Sanctuary Long Beach Campaign - March 14, 2018

Late in the evening on March 13th after hours of community testimony, the Long Beach City Council voted 6-2 (Councilmembers Supernaw and Mungo voting no) to pass the Long Beach Values Act with several accessory motions, including a presentation from city staff on the proposed “carve-outs” or exclusions of certain immigrants from protections against deportations. The city council also voted 5-3 (Councilmembers Price, Supernaw, and Mungo voting no) to approve a city-run Deportation Defense Fund with a funding commitment of \$250,000.

Tuesday night’s vote is an important step in the history of Long Beach. Nearly a year after the sanctuary conversation began locally, and on the day Trump visited California for the first time, Long Beach furthered its commitment to including immigrants as part of our collective values. This night was also historic because of the unprecedented community support for prohibiting the entanglement of ICE with the Police Department and other city departments.

These important steps were only possible because Long Beach residents stood united. Public comment on the item was near unanimous and included youth, students, community leaders, legal experts, and many others in solidarity with the Cambodian refugee community to ask for no “carve-outs” of immigrants with past convictions. The community came through once again, as it has at previous city council votes on immigration issues. We expressed our support and commitment to a shared future with everyone at the table, and decision makers heard us loud and clear.

With this important step towards sanctuary for all, we remain undaunted by the challenges that lie ahead. On Tuesday night, the police department demonstrated the influence they have over some city councilmembers and displayed their passionate desire to criminalize and deport some immigrants. Tuesday night also reminded us of the need to continue to dispute the “good immigrant versus bad immigrant” narrative and instead embrace second chances and redemption for everyone. At a time when ICE is escalating the targeting of immigrants through deception and force, we need to stand with all communities rather than perpetuate divisive language.

As a campaign and a community, we are committed to sitting down with the people, city staff (including the Long Beach Police Department), and councilmembers to finish what we started and make sanctuary for all a reality. The question before the city council is: will we have a Values Act that is inclusive of all immigrants or will we continue assisting ICE in terrorizing some of our communities?

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, and the National Immigration Law Center

