

Trump administration sues Los Angeles over sanctuary policies

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People in the audience hold up signs in support of immigrants as the Los Angeles City Council considers a “sanctuary city” ordinance during a meeting at City Hall on November 19, 2024. | Etienne Laurent/AFP via Getty Images

By JULIANN VENTURA
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The Trump administration has filed a lawsuit against the city of Los Angeles over its immigration policies, the [Justice Department announced Monday](#), claiming sanctuary policies limiting cooperation with federal immigration authorities clash with federal law.

The filing marks an escalation in the Trump administration’s feuding with California over immigration, and is the latest strike by DOJ against sanctuary-city laws in various states.

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“Sanctuary policies were the driving cause of the violence, chaos, and attacks on law enforcement that Americans recently witnessed in Los Angeles,” Attorney General Pamela Bondi said in the press release. “Jurisdictions like Los Angeles that flout federal law by prioritizing illegal aliens over American citizens are undermining law enforcement at every level – it ends under President Trump.”

The filing, which names the city, Mayor Karen Bass and the City Council, follows a wave of protests in Los Angeles over immigration raids targeting farms and businesses. It comes as the Trump administration is locked in separate litigation with Gov. Gavin Newsom, who sued the administration to block the deployment of the National Guard in the city in response to the upheaval.

The latest lawsuit argues that the city’s “refusal to cooperate with federal immigration authorities” has led to “lawlessness, rioting, looting, and vandalism.” Los Angeles had lifted a curfew placed in response to the protests after a week as protesting died down.

The filing also said that the city’s policies are “designed to and in fact do interfere with and discriminate against the Federal Government’s enforcement of federal immigration law in violation of the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution,” an argument the administration has long used in its attack on sanctuary-city laws.

The new suit was assigned to U.S. District Court Judge Fernando Olguin, an Obama appointee.

Earlier this year, the [DOJ sued New York](#) for impeding federal efforts to track down and deport undocumented immigrants, as well as [Illinois and Chicago](#) for related policies. In May, the department sued four cities in New Jersey over similar policies.

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Los Angeles has long employed sanctuary policies, including one that was passed shortly after President Donald Trump took office for his first term. More recently, after Trump won the election last year, the city passed a [sanctuary policy](#) prohibiting the use of city resources for federal immigration enforcement.

Los Angeles City Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez called out Trump for challenging sanctuary policies in California as well as other states, saying in a statement to POLITICO that “he’s trying to force every city and town to help him carry out his white nationalist agenda.”

“This baseless lawsuit only gets one thing right – we refuse to stand by and let Donald Trump deport innocent families. We’re going to do everything within our power to keep families together,” Soto-Martinez said in the statement.

Bass’s office could not be immediately reached for comment.

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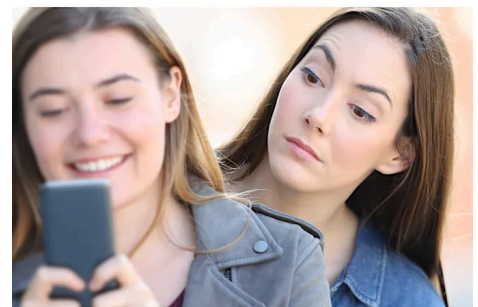


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