



Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, Senate candidate, said sanctuary cities make ‘everybody safer’

‘Immigrants commit crime at a far lower rate than native-born people,’ Fetterman said in 2016

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August 2, 2022

A 2016 clip of Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman claiming that sanctuary cities "make everybody safer" and that "immigrants commit crime at a far lower rate than native-born people" is receiving renewed attention as the U.S. Senate race heats up between him and Republican candidate Mehmet Oz.

Speaking at West Chester University on Jan. 27, 2016, Fetterman said blocking migrants from entering the country was un-American. His comments came at a time of backlash over then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's proposal to order a "complete shutdown of Muslims" entering the U.S. until it can get a grip on terrorism.

"Of course, there could be a bad apple coming in from anywhere, but you're telling me that a little 5-year-old orphan from Syria, you know, should get frozen out? It's just un-American," Fetterman said at the event during his failed 2016 Senate bid to unseat Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa.

"We need a comprehensive approach, and we need to stop kicking that can down the road and realize that the overwhelming majority, and this is a statistical fact, immigrants commit crime at a far lower rate than native-born people," Fetterman continued.

"Sanctuary cities is another policy that I very much support," he added. "Sanctuary cities, again statistically, make everybody safer. It makes everybody better. But the other side wants to demonize that, because there's a dark side of populism, and that's what the other side seems to have tapped into – that if you're the wrong color, and you're the wrong religion, and you came from the wrong country that you're automatically a suspect."

Oz, a doctor and former talk show host, seized on Fetterman's support for sanctuary cities, or cities that limit their cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in his first TV ad of the general election released Thursday.

"Sanctuary cities, weak prosecutors, crime skyrocketing, failed liberal policies are making us less safe," a narrator says in the ad.

The Oz campaign has also published a letter signed by 13 Republican county sheriffs calling on Fetterman to clarify several policy positions on topics like decriminalizing drugs and reducing prison populations.

"It's time John Fetterman starts answering publicly for his crazy views on things like support for dangerous sanctuary city policies, decriminalizing all drugs, energy-crushing policies like the Green New Deal and trillions more in wasteful spending," Oz told Fox News Digital on Saturday.

In a statement to Fox News Digital on Tuesday, Fetterman campaign spokesperson Joe Calvello said Fetterman "supports comprehensive, common-sense immigration reform that will strengthen and secure our borders and create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants."

Billy Penn, an NPR-affiliated news site, previously rated Fetterman's 2016 comments about sanctuary cities being safer "impossible" to fact check.

"Even if a widely agreed upon definition and corresponding figure existed, there appears to be no research that definitively measures this," the report said.

Since Fetterman's comments, the Cato Institute released a study in 2021 that concluded that in Texas in 2019, illegal immigrants were 37.1 percent less likely to be convicted of a crime than native-born Americans and legal immigrants were about 57.2 percent less likely to be convicted of a crime than native-born Americans.

In 2020, a study from the University of Wisconsin–Madison found "considerably lower felony arrest rates among undocumented immigrants compared to legal immigrants and native-born US citizens."