

Defense One

DHS Chief: Without Cities' Help, 'We Have to Go Into Neighborhoods' to Find the Undocumented

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April 25, 2017

Against a dusty backdrop, the sound of heavy truck traffic riding a hot breeze from a nearby Mexican highway, Department of Homeland Security chief John Kelly said Friday that the department would continue its controversial practice of arresting undocumented immigrants in places like courthouses or places where those people might go to seek services, report crimes, or even file paperwork to postpone deportation.

“The best place for us to pick up these illegal criminals is in jails and prisons. It is inconceivable to me that an elected official at any level would prefer these types of men and women to be released into the community,” Kelly said.

Sheriff's departments and police departments “want to cooperate with us and turn these people over that are in the jails,” Kelly said, meaning immigrants without proper documentation who had been apprehended by police on other charges. “If they don't do that” — meaning if local law enforcement does not hand those people over to ICE — “we have to go into neighborhoods. We have to go into courthouses. We have to go where we can find them and apprehend them.”

On Tuesday, a federal judge in San Francisco **temporarily blocked** the Trump administration's effort to withhold federal funds from “sanctuary cities,” which seek to limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

In March, immigration attorneys **cited** an increase in Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, agents in courthouses across California and other states. Critics and local lawmakers quickly objected.

“Most Americans have more daily contact with their state and local governments than with the federal government, and I am concerned about the impact on public trust and confidence in our state court system if the public feels that our state institutions are being used to facilitate other goals and objectives, no matter how expedient they may be,” California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye **wrote** in March 16 letter to U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and DHS Secretary Kelly, objecting to the practice.

On Wednesday, DHS will officially unveil a new Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement, or VOICE, office in Washington, D.C.

ICE conducted more than 240,000 deportations in fiscal 2016, according to the **agency's internal numbers**. More than 90 percent of those deported were criminals.

Separate research papers from the left-leaning **Sentencing Project** and the libertarian-leaning **CATO Institute** have shown that immigrants without proper documentation don't commit higher crimes than the general population.