

Philadelphia Sanctuary Watch

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Philadelphia has long been known for cheese-steaks, pretzels, and sports fanatics. It's also now known as a city where illegal immigrants find sanctuary from the rule of law. The acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Thomas D. Homan, lists Philadelphia as one of the four worst sanctuary cities. The others are Chicago, New York City, and San Francisco.

Our fanatical mayor, Jim Kenney, says Philly is a "welcoming city" and encourages Philadelphians to "support our immigrant residents." To that end, the City of Philadelphia has compiled an Action Guide on Immigration and "Sanctuary Cities." Residents are asked to contact Gov. Tom Wolf and their state representatives and voice their concern about efforts to defund sanctuary cities. As the poorest big city in the country, Philadelphia cannot afford to lose any state or federal funds.

Kenney denies that Philly is a sanctuary city. Rather, it's a "Fourth Amendment" city. In a June 22, 2017, letter to the Justice Department, City Solicitor Sozi Pedro Tulante formally certified that the city is in compliance with 8 U.S.C. Section 1373, which prohibits local and state governments from enacting laws or policies that limit communication about an individual's citizenship or immigration status with the Department of Homeland Security.

In remarks to federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, Attorney General Jeff Sessions made it clear that Philadelphia is in the Justice Department's crosshairs:

I urge the city of Philadelphia and every "sanctuary" jurisdiction to consider carefully the harm they are doing to their residents by refusing to cooperate with federal law enforcement and to re-think these policies. If we're going to stop the rise of violent crime, then we have to work together.

The American people want and deserve a lawful immigration system that keeps us safe and serves our national interest. This expectation is fair; it is reasonable, and it is our duty to meet it.

Philadelphia is in the midst of a development boom. A casual observer can see there are few African Americans on construction sites. Black men are locked out of publicly funded construction projects by the building trade unions. They have been replaced by cheap illegal immigrant labor on privately financed projects. Pouring salt into the wounds, gentrification is unfolding in historically black (read: segregated) neighborhoods.

Many African Americans have lost hope as jobs in the service and construction industries are filled by illegal immigrants. Tellingly, few blacks participated in the paroxysm of demonstrations in January in the wake of President Trump's ban on immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries. The May Day Without an Immigrant protest came and went without notice. Indeed, the claim of intersectionality between so-called immigrant rights and civil rights falls on deaf ears.

Although African Americans have real concerns about the direction of the Justice Department with respect to voting rights, affirmative action, and officer-involved shootings, there were only a handful of blacks among the few dozen who protested Attorney General Sessions' visit to Philadelphia.

Looking ahead, Larry Krasner, the Democratic nominee for district attorney, will likely win in November (Republicans are outnumbered 7-1). A criminal defense lawyer with zero experience as a prosecutor, Krasner was propelled to victory in the May primary with the help of \$1.45 million in campaign spending by an independent expenditure committee funded by billionaire George Soros.

Krasner supports Mayor Kenney's sanctuary policy. His campaign platform calls for resisting the Trump administration.

In the birthplace of the American democracy, we have a mayor who flouts the rule of law and a likely next district attorney who promises to accord special treatment to illegal immigrants. Welcome to the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection. ■

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