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***NYC Public Defenders, Immigrant Rights Advocates Join Legal Fight to Protect
New York City's Sanctuary Laws***

***Attorneys, Advocates Urge Court to Dismiss DOJ's Lawsuit and Uphold City's
Critical Protections for Immigrant New Yorkers***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, The Bronx Defenders, New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), UnLocal Inc., LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Immigrant Defense Project, New York County Defender Services, Brooklyn Defender Services, Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem, and Make The Road New York filed a [joint amicus brief](#) in support of New York City's motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) challenging the City's sanctuary laws, which prohibit local law enforcement and city agencies from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement efforts.

The amicus brief argues that New York City's sanctuary laws provide critical protections to the City's more than three million immigrant residents, allowing them to fully participate in and engage with their communities. Removing these protections, the brief warns, would cause a chilling effect that would dissuade immigrants from interacting with city officials and agencies for fear of their immigration status being shared with federal immigration authorities.

New York City's sanctuary laws ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, have access to essential government services including food assistance, housing programs, public health services, domestic violence shelters, and more.

The laws enhance public safety and promote fairness within New York City's criminal legal system by ensuring immigrants can meaningfully participate in the criminal legal process without fear of being funneled by local authorities into immigration detention and deportation.

Particularly given the current federal administration's recent efforts to dramatically increase immigration-related arrests, detentions, and removals, City officials must not be required to alter City laws in service of federal action that is wholly incompatible with the City's own policy priorities.

"New York City is a city of immigrants, and the federal government's attempt to override long-standing local policy in service of the current administration's mass deportation agenda is a dangerous overreach that must be rejected," said **Paula Garcia Salazar, Staff Attorney in the Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "The City's sanctuary laws are the product of decades of democratic decision-making, and we urge the court to grant the City's motion to dismiss this baseless lawsuit. We will continue to stand with New York City's diverse immigrant communities and fight to ensure that all New Yorkers — regardless of immigration status — can safely access the agencies and services they are entitled to under the law."

"The Justice Department's lawsuit endangers the public safety of all New Yorkers," said **Rex Chen, Supervising Counsel for Immigrant Rights, LatinoJustice PRLDEF**. "It tries to force cities to do the federal

government's immigration enforcement work. It tries to override our expert local conclusion that sanctuary laws make us safer by letting people visit the doctor, get housing, send kids to school, and report abuse without fearing deportation. The court should reject this lawsuit and protect the City's right to keep all New Yorkers safe."

"Our city's historic sanctuary laws ensure that the rights of New Yorkers are protected and that our city resources help all New Yorkers thrive," said **Yasmine Farhang, Executive Director of the Immigrant Defense Project**. "Just as thousands of New Yorkers are standing up for their neighbors every day, we are proud to stand with our partners in fighting back in the courts to call for this baseless lawsuit to be dismissed. This is a time for our city and all cities to commit further to standing strong on sanctuary and refusing to enable the federal government's mass deportation agenda."

"New York's immigrant communities are full of joy, beauty, and vibrancy. That's why the people of this city have consistently elected legislators to enact laws that protect all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. Our sanctuary policies are a reflection of New York values — that everyone who builds a life here deserves the opportunity to thrive," said **Sienna Fontaine, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York**. "The federal government's cruel and violent mass deportation regime could not be more in opposition to these values. We are proud to uplift the voices of our members and stand with allies to urge the court to reject this lawsuit and uphold the right of all New Yorkers to live in safety and dignity."

"At their core, New York City's sanctuary laws are about defending the due process rights and family unity of every New Yorker, and we are proud to join our esteemed partners in this fight," said **Rosa Cohen-Cruz, Director of Immigration Policy at The Bronx Defenders**. "With this motion, the City is reasserting the values of trust, public safety, and unity that underwrite these laws."

"Our immigrant communities are the backbone of this city and along with our partners, we continue to remain unwavering in our defense to protect sanctuary laws," said **Piyali Basak, Managing Director of Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem**. "We must stand firm against this administration's cruel agenda to upend lives and push communities further into the shadows."

"New York City's decades-old sanctuary laws make our City a more just home for every New Yorker," said **Jodi Ziesemer, Policy Director - Immigration Emergency Response at the New York Legal Assistance Group**. "The Justice Department's actions tear down our collective safety, rather than allow our institutions, leaders, and communities to uphold and protect the rights of every New Yorker, regardless of immigration status. In this critical moment, the courts must uphold the rule of law, rather than capitulate to the federal government's violent campaign targeting our immigrant neighbors and U.S. citizens alike."

"New York City's sanctuary laws are fundamental to the safety and dignity of every New Yorker. As public defenders, we see firsthand how these protections allow immigrant New Yorkers to access the services and legal processes they are entitled to and contribute to our communities without fear," said **Lucas Marquez, Director of Civil Rights and Law Reform at Brooklyn Defender Services**. "New York is more robust, vibrant, and safe when people trust local government. We will continue standing with our partners in defending New York City's sanctuary laws and urge the court to reject this baseless federal overreach."

"New York City has the right and responsibility to keep our local government's resources out of the business of facilitating Trump's mass detention and deportation agenda," said **Tania Mattos, Executive Director of UnLocal**. "We are proud of our sanctuary laws that respect our immigrant New Yorkers and their participation in our shared city. We stand with our partners in holding the line."

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