

---

House passes Kate's Law, anti-sanctuary city bill

30/06/2017



The Republican-controlled House on Thursday passed two immigration bills that align with President Donald Trump's aim to punish so-called "sanctuary cities" and deportees who re-enter the United States unlawfully.

The lower chamber voted 228-195 to pass the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act, and 257-167 to approve Kate's Law.

The No Sanctuary for Criminals Act would require cities to comply with federal immigration authorities — such as U.S. Customs and Immigration — or face a cutoff of federal law enforcement funds. The bill is similar to an executive order Trump signed in January, which was ultimately blocked in federal court.

There are more than 300 "sanctuary cities" in the United States — including New York City, San Francisco and Los Angeles — that have written or unwritten policies against complying with immigration officials. The crux of their arguments is that federal detainer orders bring about a number of unintended consequences that cause harm to the cities and counties in which the targeted immigrants reside. Those areas do, however, cooperate with ICE when immigrants are the subject of criminal warrants.

"Sanctuary cities are anything but safe," Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly said. "Instead, these are places that allow some criminals to go free."

"By flagrantly disregarding the rule of law, sanctuary cities are putting lives at risk," House Speaker Paul Ryan added. "And we cannot tolerate that."

Kate's Law is named for Kate Steinle, a San Francisco woman who was killed in 2015 allegedly by an undocumented immigrant who had been deported multiple times. It seeks to increase the maximum penalties for migrants who re-enter the United States illegally after deportation.

"If you are going to receive taxpayer dollars from the federal government to keep people safe, then you have got to follow the law and keep them safe," Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., the sponsor of Kate's Law, said. "That's the reason why we do that."

The bills still need to be approved by the Senate, where many analysts believe both will be defeated. A similar effort by the Senate last year failed.

Trump has repeatedly advocated for stricter laws against criminals who are in the country illegally. Earlier this year, he announced the creation of VOICE — Victims of Immigrant Crime Engagement.

Critics of efforts targeting "sanctuary cities" blasted the bills' passages Thursday, saying it's inappropriate for the U.S. government to mandate that local law enforcement agencies enforce federal laws — particularly by threatening to cut funding, which totals in the billions nationwide.

"That's just bogus," Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., told CNN Thursday. "There's nothing that any state or locality can or should do to prevent [ICE] from enforcing immigration laws. What they want to do is commandeer state and locals to do their job for them, and a lot of police departments object to that because they need to build trust with communities."

"This bill perpetuates the ugly myth that immigrants are more dangerous and more likely to commit crimes than native Americans," Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., said. "This bill demonizes immigrants, punishes communities that seek to build trust between immigrants and law enforcement and allows indefinite detention, ... all while making us less safe."

Copyright 2016 United Press International, Inc. (UPI). Any reproduction, republication, redistribution and/or modification of any UPI content is expressly prohibited without UPI's prior written consent.