



**NEW
SANCTUARY
MOVEMENT**
OF PHILADELPHIA

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To: Chairman of City Council's Public Safety Committee, Councilman Curtis Jones
CC: Philadelphia City Council, Mayor Michael Nutter

Dear Councilman Jones,

New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia writes in support of the March 3, 2014 City Council public hearing on the collaboration between the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and urges the City of Philadelphia to stop honoring all ICE hold requests. As an interfaith, multicultural immigrant justice organization, New Sanctuary Movement builds community across faith, ethnicity, and class in our work to end injustices against immigrants regardless of immigration status, express radical welcome for all, and ensure that values of dignity, justice, hospitality are lived out in practice and upheld in policy.

As a grassroots organization of immigrants and their allies, we see the effects of deportation via compliance with non-mandatory ICE holds every day. Our community has been ripped apart by the collaboration between the PPD and ICE. Compliance with ICE holds results in children who may never see their parents again, spouses left without partners, and our members deported to countries they fled because of death threats, violence, and deep, systemic poverty. This comes at the expense of Philadelphia taxpayers. By using local tax dollars to deport immigrants out of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia prioritizes deportation and family separation while cutting the real essential services that all Philadelphians need to survive.

Our undocumented members, including children, routinely witness and/or are victims of crimes and do not call the police, knowing that any interaction with law enforcement can result in deportation. As such, ICE holds threaten public safety for all Philadelphia residents. Non-citizens who commit crimes and serve jail time are doubly punished by being deported immediately after completing their sentences. As people of faith, we believe in second chances and rehabilitation – not serving double punishments, which further traumatizes family members who are left behind.

As a faith-based organization working with religious congregations throughout Philadelphia, we have organized faith communities to end PPD cooperation with ICE holds since their implementation in 2008. We are encouraged that Mayor Nutter is taking our grave concerns on currently local immigration policy into consideration, but we urge the Mayor and his administration to end ICE holds for all of our community members, regardless of history with the criminal system. Ending ICE holds will not interfere with the criminal justice system. Only by ending all ICE holds can we honor the dignity of all of our immigrant family, friends, and community members.

The City of Philadelphia now has the historic opportunity to end compliance with ICE holds, strengthening our multicultural communities and honoring the foundation of our city. We urge City Council and the Mayor's Administration to support immigrants and their allies by ending all compliance with ICE holds. We invite Mayor Nutter to work with us to achieve this goal. We will continue to organize immigrants and their allies until Philadelphia becomes a welcoming city for all, regardless of immigration status.

Sincerely,

Peter Pedemonti, Blanca Pacheco, and Nicole Kligerman
Staff, New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia