Support the Safe Communities Act

H.3573 (Reps. Ruth Balser & Liz Miranda) and S.1401 (Sen. Eldridge)

In the current climate, immigrants in Massachusetts are increasingly vulnerable and isolated, avoiding medical treatment, emergency services, and court or police protection for fear that they or their family members will be deported. The Safe Communities Act restores confidence in local public institutions by allowing our police and court officials to focus on public safety instead of getting tangled up in immigration enforcement.

1. Ensures police and court officials do not inquire about immigration status unless required by law.

   The Massachusetts State Police and many local police departments have similar policies. This practice is especially important to immigrant survivors of domestic violence and those who assist them, including medical providers, who seek assurance that the abuse can safely be reported to the police.

2. Protects basic rights, just like a “Miranda” warning.

   Before ICE questions someone in local custody, police would need to obtain their consent on a form that explains their right to decline an interview or have their own attorney present, just like a “Miranda” warning in a criminal context. Otherwise, people often unwittingly jeopardize their immigration cases and their ability to keep their families together.

3. Creates standards for law enforcement and court officials to notify ICE only when a person is released after serving a sentence, not before.

   Current practice undermines our court system by encouraging ICE to take custody of people before they have their day in court, denying justice to victims and defendants alike. This provision does not restrict other types of law enforcement communications with ICE.

4. Ends 287(g) agreements.

   Prevents contracts with ICE that allow state or local law enforcement to act as federal immigration agents, at state expense. Because county sheriffs often serve as temporary jailors for small police departments, these contracts damage the relationship between immigrant communities and the police they rely on for protection.

5. Requires law enforcement training on this guidance.

   Ensures that law enforcement agencies incorporate this guidance into their training programs and permits the filing of a complaint about alleged violations with the relevant agencies or with the Attorney General’s civil rights division, which will annually summarize any complaints received.

Policy questions? Contact:
Amy Grunder at agrunder@miracoalition.org or tel: (617) 350-5480, x222 / cell: 617-230-9491
Gavi Wolfe at gwolfe@aclum.org or tel: (617) 482-3170 x340 / cell: 617-694-9177
The Safe Communities Act
H.3573 and S.1401

STATEWIDE ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

ACLU of Massachusetts
Act On Massachusetts
American Academy of Pediatrics – Mass. Chapter
American College of Physicians – Mass. Chapter
American Friends Service Committee – New England
American Immigration Lawyers Assn. New England Chapter
American Jewish Committee – New England
Amnesty International USA, Boston Field Office
Anti-Defamation League (ADL) New England
Better Future Project & 350 Massachusetts
Committee for Public Counsel Services
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MA)
Digital Fourth
EMPath
ForwardMA
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization
Haitian American Chamber of Commerce of Mass.
Health Care for All
Health Law Advocates, Inc.
Indivisible Massachusetts
International Institute of New England
Jane Doe, Inc.
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)
Jewish Family & Children’s Service
Jewish Voice for Peace
Latinos Unidos de Massachusetts
Lawyers for Civil Rights
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Mass. Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
Massachusetts Asian American Commission
Massachusetts Bar Association
Massachusetts Business Immigration Coalition
Mass. Coalition for Adult Education
Mass. Communities Action Network (MCAN)
Mass. Educators of English Language Learners (MATSOL)
Mass. Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts Medical Society
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Massachusetts Teachers Association
Massachusetts Voter Table
Muslim Justice League
National Association of Social Workers – MA
National Organization for Women (NOW) MA
Northeast Organic Farming Association – MA
Oxfam America
Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Mass.
ProGente Connections / Episcopal Diocese of Mass.
Project Citizenship
Public Higher Education Network of Mass. (PHENOM)
Progressive Massachusetts
SEIU 1199
SEIU 32BJ
SEIU State Council
The African Council (T.A.C.)
United American Indians of New England (UAINE)
UUMass Action
Women’s Bar Association of Massachusetts
Young Democrats of Massachusetts

Note: In addition to the statewide organizations listed above, more than 125 local and regional organizations have endorsed the Safe Communities Act as of July 15, 2020.