

Sanctuary City Accountability Act

Introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (CA)

Background

The ongoing and unprecedented immigration crisis at the Southern U.S. border has overwhelmed U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), with more than 10 million illegal entrants since 2021.

This intolerable situation has been made even worse by the multiple regions of the country that have self-designated as sanctuary jurisdictions – essentially cities, counties, or states that as a matter of official policy do not comply with federal immigration law, do not assist in turning over known and violent felons to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and intentionally shield criminal aliens from the law. This practice has exposed communities to criminals in the country illegally.

One of these illegal aliens – Jose Ibarra – entered America illegally in 2022, and was soon after paroled into the country. In 2023, he was arrested and charged with endangering a child. But since New York is a Sanctuary City, Ibarra was released before ICE could issue a detainer.¹ In February 2024, according to authorities in Clarke County, GA, Ibarra murdered nursing student Laken Riley. This incident alone underscores the serious threat that Sanctuary Cities pose.

Rep Issa's Bill

The Sanctuary City Accountability Act (SCAA), introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa, creates a private right of action whereby victims, or their immediate family members, can sue a sanctuary jurisdiction for releasing the would-be offender into the local community. This bill empowers Americans to hold these jurisdictions accountable where the Biden-Harris Administration refuses to do so.

Key Legislation Points

- Creates a private right of action for individuals, or their family, to sue Sanctuary Jurisdictions for injunctive relief or monetary damages.
- Exempts local governments from liability if they are implementing a sanctuary policy directed by the State.
- Revises and strengthens the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide avenues for Americans to seek redress against Sanctuary Cities for policies that prohibit law enforcement coordination.
- Discourages Sanctuary Cities for refusing to comply with ICE detainers and Federal immigration officers.

To cosponsor or with questions, please contact Rep Issa's Office, Levi Lall, at levi.lall@mail.house.gov.

¹ S. Comm. on the Judiciary, DHS Confirms to Graham: Laken Riley Murder Suspect Illegally Paroled Into U.S. (Apr. 16, 2024), <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/press/rep/releases/dhs-confirms-to-graham-laken-riley-murder-suspect-illegally-paroled-into-us>.