



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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October 19, 2015

Dear Senator:

We write in opposition to S. 2146, the *Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act of 2015*, which the full Senate is scheduled to vote on Tuesday, October 20, 2015. In our view, the legislation would undermine public safety, harm poor communities and individuals, and remove discretion from the courts, thus increasing the costs of enforcement and incarceration. We strongly urge you to vote against cloture on the motion to proceed to this legislation, as well as to vote against the measure, itself, should the motion to invoke cloture succeed.

First, the legislation would withhold federal enforcement funds from certain jurisdictions and attempt to force local jurisdictions to “cooperate” with federal immigration enforcement officials, even when such local jurisdictions believe that such cooperation might erode trust between local law enforcement and the immigrant communities they serve. We fear that such a requirement would make it difficult for some communities to effectively protect the public from criminal activity, making those communities less safe. As a result, we fear that the bill would worsen public safety overall, thus defeating the stated purpose of the bill.

Second, the legislation would bar federal funding to some communities under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which assists in the construction of public housing in poor communities. This is a program unrelated to crime prevention and would penalize poor communities and poor individuals.

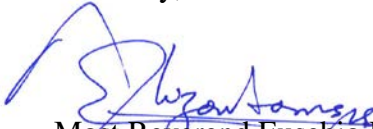
Finally, we strongly oppose the bill’s imposition of mandatory minimum sentences for illegal re-entry into the United States. This would not only drive up the costs of enforcement and incarceration, it would impose a one-size-fits-all policy that does not take into account mitigating circumstances, such as a person fleeing persecution. It also would remove the ability of a judge to impose a penalty commensurate with the offense.

It is our strong view that S. 2146 is an overreach and would make our communities more dangerous for U.S. citizens and others. Instead, we urge you to work to improve communication

between local and federal law enforcement so that those who are a real threat to the nation are not released into the community.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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Most Reverend Eusebio Elizondo
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle, WA
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration