

Judge Blocks Trump on Sanctuary City Funding

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A federal judge has blocked the Trump administration from withholding federal funding from 34 U.S. cities and counties that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities, a ruling that could have wide-reaching implications for local governments nationwide.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick of San Francisco extended a preliminary injunction late Friday, preventing the administration from cutting or conditioning federal funds for jurisdictions labeled as “sanctuary cities.” The injunction covers major cities including Boston, Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles, along with 30 additional counties. Earlier orders had already protected cities such as San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle.

Judge Orrick’s decision came after the administration offered limited opposition, arguing only that the initial injunction had been incorrect. The ruling also prevents the government from imposing immigration-related conditions on specific grant programs.

The administration has increasingly pressured sanctuary communities to comply with federal immigration enforcement, fulfilling President Donald Trump’s campaign pledge to

remove individuals residing in the United States illegally. One executive order directs the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security to withhold federal money from sanctuary jurisdictions. Another mandates that all federal agencies ensure that payments to state and local governments do not support policies shielding undocumented immigrants from deportation. Cities and counties that challenged these orders argued that billions of dollars in federal funding could be at risk.

Judge Orrick, appointed by former President Barack Obama, described the executive actions as an unconstitutional “coercive threat” to local governments.

In earlier years of the Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security released a list of more than 500 jurisdictions identified as noncompliant with federal immigration standards. The list, published in 2017, was later removed from the department’s website after critics highlighted that some jurisdictions had actively cooperated with federal immigration authorities.

The Justice Department has also filed lawsuits against New York, Los Angeles, and other cities over their sanctuary policies, highlighting ongoing legal disputes between the federal government and local authorities. Sanctuary jurisdictions generally limit cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which enforces immigration laws nationwide. While ICE often relies on state and local authorities to identify and detain immigrants wanted for deportation, sanctuary policies restrict such collaboration.

The court’s decision reinforces the autonomy of local governments to set policies regarding immigration enforcement while maintaining access to federal funding. Legal experts suggest that the ruling may set a precedent for future disputes between the federal government and jurisdictions resisting federal immigration mandates.

The Trump administration has appealed the first injunction, signaling that the issue may continue to unfold in federal courts. Meanwhile, sanctuary cities and counties can continue to operate without immediate financial penalties tied to federal immigration enforcement policies.