



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 22, 2025

PRESENTER: John Jansons, City Manager

SUBJECT: Request by Mayor Pacheco to discuss “Sanctuary Cities” with the City Council, with possible direction to staff. (JAJ)

RECOMMENDATION: City Council discuss the subject of “Sanctuary Cities”, with possible direction to staff.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 8th City Council meeting, Mayor Pacheco requested information about sanctuary cities in addition to the staff report item scheduled for January 22nd that responds to Councilman Herrera’s request of December 12th, 2024 that asked for staff to respond to his question of, “How does the Kerman Police Department interact with undocumented persons”?

The January 22nd report addressed that question, and in sum, the Kerman Police Department abides by, and follows, State law enacted by SB 54 (**Attachment ‘A’**)

DISCUSSION:

With regard to Mayor Pacheco’s interest in “Sanctuary Cities”, a short Google search provides much information on this topic. For example, Reverend Gus Shultz of the Universal Lutheran Church in Berkeley, CA is credited as the pioneer to first establish a “Sanctuary City” policy in 1971 to protect Vietnam War Era draft evaders and conscientious objectors.

Through the 1980s and 1990s the sanctuary concept was expanded to address persons fleeing the civil war in El Salvador and Guatemala and the communist regime of Manuel Ortega in Nicaragua. Since then, many American cities have declared “sanctuary” status and policies to aid and comfort asylum seekers, refugees, or undocumented persons residing in the United States in violation of Federal immigration law(s).

More specifically, and more recently the declaration of status as a sanctuary city often simply means that local law enforcement authorities, including jail systems, will not assist with, or honor, Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer requests besides providing any other subsistence services to those persons in the US in violation of Federal immigration law(s).

Today, with much uncertainty regarding future proposals by the new incoming Federal Administration, there is much public discussion about what may happen to undocumented

persons who entered the United States (US) or have remained in the US, in violation of Federal immigration law(s).

Communities and cities have several avenues afforded to them to show sympathy or support for the sanctuary concept or to enact such measures. These may include: 1) public statements of support for undocumented persons, by individuals or elected bodies; 2) adoption of resolutions outlining specific principals important to them, the Council, respecting, and supporting undocumented persons.

¹ <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Rev-Gus-Schultz-mdash-pastor-sanctuary-activist-3300285.php>

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanctuary_city

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council may wish to consider:

- 1) A public statement by Council supporting residents of Kerman, or
- 2) Adopt a resolution of support for all residents of Kerman.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time in discussing this matter.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. SB 54 w/Exhibit