

# Should Ohio law enforcement be required help ICE? GOP lawmakers say yes

*Ohio Republicans want to crack down on sanctuary cities and require local police to help Immigration and Customs Enforcement.*

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As President Donald Trump carries out a sweeping immigration crackdown, Ohio Republicans want to rein in sanctuary cities and compel police to help the federal government.

House Bill 26 would direct state and local law enforcement to assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which has ramped up arrests and detentions since Trump took office. Police would be required to report anyone they arrest and believe to be undocumented, and jails must detain immigrants upon request.

Ohio agencies would also have to participate in ICE's 287(g) program, which allows local police to issue administrative warrants in jails and hold undocumented immigrants until ICE can pick them up. No Ohio departments were part of the voluntary program as of December, according to ICE.

"Our role as the state and federal government is still to enforce reasonable laws, make sure that people's rights are protected," said Rep. Tex Fischer, R-Boardman, one of the bill's sponsors. "There is not a constitutionally protected right to illegally enter and reside in this country."

The bill from Fischer and Rep. Josh Williams, R-Sylvania Township, is not a new idea – Williams introduced similar legislation last year. But its revival comes as cities and school districts grapple with the impact of Trump's immigration policies, including ICE raids in northeast Ohio.

The proposal goes beyond law enforcement. It also requires local leaders to comply with a federal law that prevents undocumented immigrants from receiving certain public benefits. If cities ignore that rule or refuse to assist with immigration enforcement, they could face an investigation by the attorney general and lose state funding.

"This would end any kind of inkling that local governments can act in a way that others proclaim are sanctuary cities," said Gary Daniels, chief lobbyist for the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio.

Democratic mayors in Ohio's largest cities have spoken out in recent weeks.

Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval pledged to cooperate with the Trump administration, but he said city officials "will not be involved" in federal immigration enforcement unless required by law. Columbus will maintain its current practice of not deploying city resources solely to investigate someone's immigration status.

"Cleveland police are tasked with protecting public safety, and while we will take action against anybody who commits violent crimes, we are not enforcing general, federal immigration law," Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb said last month. "They are not here to play politics or be used as a tool for fear."

Republicans who back House Bill 26 contend the mayors' comments reinforce the need to pass state legislation.

"The Supreme Court has been quite clear that immigration is a federal issue, not a local issue," Attorney General Dave Yost wrote in a letter to lawmakers. "Local governments are no more free to make up their own immigration policy than they are to print their own money."