**Sanctuary Cities: Pros and Cons**

Sanctuary Cities usually limit their cooperation with the federal government in efforts to enforce immigration laws on the basis of encouraging immigrants to report crimes, enroll their children in schools and use other health and social services. This is said to reduce the fear of deportation and family break-ups. This has a number of pros and cons.

Let’s start with the pros. For one, it is a fact that sanctuary cities encourage good relationships, or at least better, with law enforcement. Undocumented immigrants are less likely to report being victims of or give information about crimes. This makes criminals thrive while the general public suffers. Sanctuary cities reduce these risks significantly. Secondly, sanctuary cities’ policies are protected by the operation of the 10th Amendment though the separation of federal and State powers. This means that Congress cannot compel States to collect immigration status. Thirdly, sanctuary cities have a wider labor base. It is not uncommon to find relatively cheap labor in Sanctuary cities; immigrants get jobs and employers get affordable labor.

Schools in these cities also welcome children and make them feel safe. Children from immigrant families can attend schools in these cities without fear of their information getting shared with enforcement agencies and consequently being rounded up. It suffices to say that sanctuary cities curb family break-ups through legal action. Without their protection, federal law enforcement becomes more likely to separate families by deportation. Therefore by their mere operation, sanctuary cities prevent the break-up of immigrant families. Finally, sanctuary cities are a good thing for the economy. Simply put; immigrants are people. People equate to labor, labor equates to production, manufacturing and distribution. The end result is a significant progress in economic development both in these cities and nationwide. However, these cities also come with certain legitimate dangers for their residents and for the country. These are discussed below.

First, it is a fact that sanctuary cities tend to harbor criminals and create a dangerous environment for U.S citizens. These criminals cannot be effectively ousted from the country because of lack of cooperation. Out of 8,145 undocumented immigrants released from detention requests between January 1, 2014 and August 31, 2014 in an Francisco, 63% had previous criminal convictions or were marked a public safety concern; 36.6% had felony charges or convictions and 2.9% had three or more misdemeanor convictions (ProCon, 2016). These statistics present a strong case for safety; such individuals as referred to above create an unsafe environment for Americans and other law-abiding citizens. It may be said that America has criminals even without the consideration of immigrants. However, having one problem doesn’t make it right to compound on it. Secondly, sanctuary cities prevent police from investigating, questioning and arresting persons who break federal laws; they often have to wait for repeat crimes to occur just to get these individuals off the streets. It also costs a lot of funding to support immigrants, a duty which cannot be bypassed on the grounds of documentation. Sanctuary cities also contribute to the loss of jobs for American citizens because of competition with cheaper labor from undocumented immigrants. The status of being undocumented makes immigrants desperate for jobs, which means they are more prone to being employed over citizens and with substandard employment conditions.

At the end of the day, one has to weigh the security, welfare and development concerns of American citizens against the morality of being a sanctuary city. While these cities provide a lot in terms of augmenting relationships, it will be pointless if these relationships are created on a foundation of hurt, job loss and insecurity for the everyday law-abiding citizen. If immigrants are to be integrated into the American society, it should be done lawfully.

References

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