



Washington State Senate

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Governor Jay Inslee
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Governor Inslee,

Now that your focus seems to be back on *our* Washington, I hope to turn it to an important issue of governing: the unacceptable risk posed to communities around the state from the “sanctuary” laws created during the 2019 legislative session.

During the legislative session, two officers were murdered by a criminal alien and you still signed the bill into law. Not too long after that a disabled woman was assaulted by an undocumented immigrant, who – due to the ambiguity of the policy you supported – was released by state courts. The offender almost immediately revictimized the same woman and subsequently fled the country.

Clearly this policy is flawed as it provides protections to violent criminals who continue to victimize our law-abiding residents of our state. The rhetoric used during the debate on this legislation was about protecting people in the workplace. This policy makes them less safe. You and other proponents of the state’s sanctuary policy have given free rein to criminal elements to operate with impunity without fear of deportation.

Of particular concern are efforts to obstruct immigration officials from arresting known criminals when they are – albeit for other reasons – already in custody, meaning jails and court facilities in our state. This policy is dangerous for both prospective detainees and law enforcement. Since weapons are prohibited in courthouses and jails, immigration officials can be confident that an arrest may be made with less risk of harm – to an officer, to the offender, or innocent members of the public – than if they must attempt to apprehend offenders back in the community where they may have access to weapons.

We must fix the significant problems created by this flawed policy. I believe it is possible to be compassionate while standing up for the rule of law. That is not happening now. The unintended consequences of this shortsighted law grant greater protections to criminals than average citizens receive, and particularly jeopardizes immigrant communities.

I will be introducing corrective legislation in the coming session, and I look forward to your involvement to protect Washingtonians.

Sincerely,

Senator Phil Fortunato