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CITY OF SAN DIEGO JOINS FIFTEEN CITIES AND COUNTIES AS PLAINTIFFS TO CHALLENGE FEDERAL ACTIONS THAT THREATEN CRITICAL SERVICES

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego joined a lawsuit with San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Jose, Oakland, and several other cities to preserve federal grant funding from threats against so-called “sanctuary cities” that limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. An amended complaint filed Thursday evening added 11 jurisdictions, including the City of San Diego, as plaintiffs in a lawsuit that challenges Trump Administration actions to withhold federal funds administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. According to the complaint, these actions violate federal law and are blatantly unconstitutional by imposing conditions or limitations on federal grants without Congressional authority. Like several other plaintiff cities and counties, the City of San Diego is a “welcoming city” but has no restrictions on its police force or other public employees beyond those imposed by state law.

“This is about protecting and preserving the vital services that San Diegans rely on every day.” said San Diego City Attorney Heather Ferbert. **“By joining this lawsuit alongside 15 other local jurisdictions, we’re making it clear to the Administration that we won’t back down in the face of their threats and we will defend our residents while upholding the state and federal laws that protect them.”**

The City of San Diego receives millions of dollars in grants from the U.S. Department of Justice that provide funding to critical law enforcement services such as forensic evidence processing, special task forces, and other crime control initiatives. Withholding this funding as the City faces a budget deficit would cause significant harm to San Diego residents.

The lawsuit, initially filed on February 7, involves jurisdictional policies, like the California Values Act, that limit the use of local resources to aid federal immigration officials in carrying out civil immigration enforcement. These non-cooperation policies focus local resources on local priorities such as providing services to vulnerable populations and carrying out traditional law enforcement activity to protect local public safety. They prohibit the federal government’s commandeering of local government resources to carry out civil immigration enforcement, which is a federal responsibility. The courts have repeatedly upheld local governments’ Constitutional right to choose a policy of non-cooperation. These policies in no way prevent the federal government from using its own resources to enforce federal immigration laws.

The lawsuit and amendment were filed in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. The case is City and County of San Francisco, County of San Clara, City of Portland, Martin Luther King, Jr. County, City of New Haven, City of Oakland, City of Emeryville, City of San Jose, City of San Diego, City of Sacramento, City of Santa Cruz, County of Monterey, City of Seattle, City of Minneapolis, City St. Paul, City of Santa Fe, v. Donald J. Trump, et al., U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, Case No. 25-cv-01350.

The full amended complaint is attached.

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