



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

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City Attorney Asks U.S. Attorney General To Protect Crime Victims and Witnesses

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott today joined 11 other California prosecutors in urging the U.S. Attorney General to exclude California courthouses from immigration arrests, a practice that jeopardizes law enforcement's ability to prosecute criminals and protect the public.

The letter urges U.S. Attorney General Jeffrey Sessions and Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly to include courthouses among the sensitive sites where immigration enforcement actions are discouraged.

It supports the position of California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye that courthouse immigration sweeps compromise core values of fairness and undermine the judiciary's ability to provide equal access to justice.

The letter was signed by six city attorneys and six district attorneys, among them Elliott and San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis.

"ICE courthouse arrests make all Californians less safe," the letter states. "These practices deter residents concerned about their immigration status from appearing in court – including as crime victims and witnesses – jeopardizing effective prosecution of criminals who may then re-offend. Courthouse enforcement by ICE also risks confrontations that could endanger members of the public at courthouses throughout our state."

A copy of the letter is attached.

Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye's March 16 letter to Sessions and Kelly can be viewed here:

<http://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/chief-justice-cantil-sakauye-objects-to-immigration-enforcement-tactics-at-california-courthouses>

"Courthouse arrests will deny justice to the most vulnerable members of our society – victims of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and sexual assault," City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"We are less safe when victims and witnesses are discouraged from helping our police and prosecutors put criminals behind bars."**

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