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ROB BONTA

Attorney General

Joint Statement from Thirteen State Attorneys General: State and Local Law Enforcement Cannot Be Commandeered for Federal Immigration Enforcement

Press Release / *Joint Statement from Thirteen State Attorneys General: State...*

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OAKLAND – California Attorney General Rob Bonta, along with the attorneys general of New York, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, today issued a joint statement addressing a memorandum from a Trump political appointee at the U.S. Department of Justice addressing state and local involvement in federal immigration enforcement:

"It is well-established—through longstanding Supreme Court precedent—that the U.S. Constitution prevents the federal government from commandeering states to enforce federal laws. While the federal government may use its own resources for federal immigration enforcement, the court ruled in *Printz v. United States* that the federal government cannot 'impress into its service—and at no cost to itself—the police officers of the 50 States.' This balance of power between the federal government and state governments is a touchstone of our American system of federalism.

"Despite what he may say to the contrary, the President cannot unilaterally re-write the Constitution. The President has made troubling threats to weaponize the U.S. Department of Justice's prosecutorial authority and resources to attack public servants acting in compliance with their state laws, interfering with their ability to build trust with the communities they serve and protect. Right now, these vague threats are just that: empty words on paper. But rest assured, our states will not hesitate to respond if these words become illegal actions.

"As state attorneys general, we have a responsibility to enforce state laws – and we will continue to investigate and prosecute crimes, regardless of immigration status. We will not be distracted by the President's mass deportation agenda."

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