



PRESS RELEASE

Operation Guardian Angel Launched to Neutralize California's Sanctuary State Policies that Protect Criminal Illegal Aliens

Monday, May 19, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California

LOS ANGELES – The United States Attorney's Office along with its federal law enforcement partners today announced the launch of Operation Guardian Angel, a program that seeks to neutralize California's sanctuary state policy and protect Americans from criminal illegal aliens incarcerated in county jails by issuing federal arrest warrants for them.

The Central District of California – comprised of the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura – is home to an estimated 1.5 million illegal aliens. Among this population are gang members and other dangerous felons.

The operation will file complaints and arrest warrants to allow federal law enforcement to take as many defendants as possible into custody from state jails. The program, which began May 10, has resulted in the arrest of 13 defendants as of May 15. Those numbers are expected to grow.

"Even the worst criminal aliens in state custody are frequently released into the community because California's sanctuary state policies block cooperation with federal law enforcement," said United States Attorney Bill Essayli. "These laws effectively render federal immigration detainers meaningless. The days of giving criminal illegal aliens a free pass are over. While California may be presently disregarding detainers, it cannot ignore federal arrest warrants."

The danger to the community of state protection of criminal illegal aliens could not be starker. In February 2025, José Cristian Saravia-Sánchez, 30, of Mexico, shot and killed an Inglewood man who tried to stop him from stealing a catalytic converter. Despite the fact he was an illegal alien who had been convicted of vehicle theft, was removed from the United States in 2013, and had been arrested 11 times between June 2022 and August 2024, local law enforcement was prevented by state law from complying with an immigration detainer request.

The goal of Operation Guardian Angel is to neutralize – as far as possible – California’s sanctuary state policy and make our community safer.

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