



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**National Lawyers Guild Urges City of Chico Adopt Sanctuary Policy
'Consistent with Chico's Well-Known Progressive Values'**

SACRAMENTO, Ca. – The National Lawyers Guild (NLG), in a letter to Chico public officials this week, urged them to "adopt a sanctuary policy that is consistent with Chico's well-known progressive values."

Amreet Sandhu, J.D., interim president of the Sacramento NLG Chapter, which includes the Chico area, noted the "present-day sanctuary movement in the (U.S.) came about in the 1980s, saved thousands of lives, and helped convince the U.S. government to recognize the refugee status of Central Americans fleeing death squads...violence, economic conditions, and other factors continue to push people to flee their home nations, and seek refuge in the United States."

The letter continued: "There are both moral and practical reasons for implementing a sanctuary status in our local communities. In the early 2000s, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began implementing policies to attempt to force local police to serve as immigration enforcement officers through 287(g) agreements and the Secure Communities (SCOM) program.

As implementation of these policies led to innocent witnesses and victims of crime being deported -- including domestic violence survivors -- police departments saw a decrease in the willingness of immigrants to report any kind of crime in our communities. Recognizing that when local police are seen as immigration officers, immigrants are afraid to report crime, more than 320 jurisdictions across the United States have limited their collaboration with ICE.

"Due to this community pushback across the country, as well as federal rulings that ICE's requests to detain individuals are unconstitutional without probable cause, SCOM was then replaced by the Obama Priority Enforcement Program. However, we now see a swing back to those old policies of the past, and again, members of our community are feeling pushed back into the shadows.

"It is vital for these individuals to know that they can go to the police for help, and for police to develop relationships with these communities. When all individuals can report dangerous situations without the fear of being deported and separated from their families, safety is increased for all community members. Policies that promote equal policing also help protect against racial profiling. We encourage the longstanding efforts that many cities and towns have made to foster trust between local law enforcement officers and all community members, regardless of their immigration status."

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The National Lawyers Guild, whose membership includes lawyers, legal workers, jailhouse lawyers, and law students, was formed in 1937 as the United States' first racially-integrated bar association to advocate for the protection of constitutional, human and civil rights.