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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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July 8, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Attorney General Lynch and Secretary Johnson:

I write to express serious concerns about the Administration's lack of attention to state and local governments or departments that enact policies that undermine federal immigration law. Specifically, I am very frustrated with the policies enacted by San Francisco, California, and other jurisdictions, and how your department is responding to them.

The heartbreaking death of a Kathryn Steinle at the hands of a criminal alien in the country illegally underscores the critical need for swift and decisive action to prevent further tragedies of this nature. San Francisco's sanctuary and non-cooperative policies have directly shielded violent offenders from deportation, raising questions as to how many more criminal aliens are being protected and allowed to remain on the streets today.

Therefore, I would like answers to the following questions:

1. When did the Department of Justice or the Department of Homeland Security have knowledge that Francisco Lopez-Sanchez had been released from local custody?
2. How many detainers or requests for notification are outstanding across the country, and what jurisdictions have detainers or requests for notification pending?
3. How many detainers or requests for notification are outstanding in the City and County of San Francisco?
4. How many individuals has the Department of Homeland Security turned over to San Francisco in the past five years in order to prosecute the individual for a criminal offense? How many of those individuals have been returned to the Department for immigration proceedings?
5. What specific steps have been and will be taken by your Department to compel San Francisco to reverse its policy of ignoring immigration detainers?
 - a. Do such steps include the conditioning the award of federal grants on the city or county honoring immigration detainers? If not, why not?

- b. Please provide an overview of meetings held between federal officials and city or county officials. I would also like copies of all emails or other communications and other documentation that exist to understand how the federal government has been or is attempting to rectify the situation and improve cooperation.

More importantly, I urge you to take a direct role in this matter. San Francisco's ordinance is a serious threat to the public's safety that requires your immediate and personal attention. It requires a more thoughtful approach than just dissolving the Secure Communities program. The Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), which substantially reduces the number of aliens who remain priorities for removal under its terms, has done nothing to garner the support or cooperation from jurisdictions, including San Francisco, that refuse to cooperate on immigration matters.

This is too important of an issue to go unresolved, and as a matter of public safety and national security, I urge you to take control of the situation so that detainees are not ignored and undocumented individuals are properly detained and put in deportation proceedings.

Kathryn Steinle and her family deserve more than a bureaucratic answer as to why her life was taken. The American people deserve to understand why the government is tolerating cities and states that turn a blind eye to criminal aliens and those who violate our immigration laws.

I request a response to this letter no later than July 15, 2015.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary