

# MASSACHUSETTS SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION

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## Support the Safe Communities Act

**H.3573** (Reps. Ruth Balsler & Liz Miranda) and **S.1401** (Sen. Eldridge)

**In the current climate, immigrants in Massachusetts are increasingly vulnerable and isolated, avoiding medical treatment, emergency services, and court or police protection for fear that they or their family members will be deported. The Safe Communities Act restores confidence in local public institutions by allowing our police and court officials to focus on public safety instead of getting tangled up in immigration enforcement.**

**1. Ensures police and court officials do not inquire about immigration status unless required by law.**

The Massachusetts State Police and many local police departments have similar policies. This practice is especially important to immigrant survivors of domestic violence and those who assist them, including medical providers, who seek assurance that the abuse can safely be reported to the police.

**2. Protects basic rights, just like a “Miranda” warning.**

Before ICE questions someone in local custody, police would need to obtain their consent on a form that explains their right to decline an interview or have their own attorney present, just like a “Miranda” warning in a criminal context. Otherwise, people often unwittingly jeopardize their immigration cases and their ability to keep their families together.

**3. Creates standards for law enforcement and court officials to notify ICE only when a person is released after serving a sentence, not before.**

Current practice undermines our court system by encouraging ICE to take custody of people before they have their day in court, denying justice to victims and defendants alike. This provision does not restrict other types of law enforcement communications with ICE.

**4. Ends 287(g) agreements.**

Prevents contracts with ICE that allow state or local law enforcement to act as federal immigration agents, at state expense. Because county sheriffs often serve as temporary jailors for small police departments, these contracts damage the relationship between immigrant communities and the police they rely on for protection.

**5. Requires law enforcement training on this guidance.**

Ensures that law enforcement agencies incorporate this guidance into their training programs and permits the filing of a complaint about alleged violations with the relevant agencies or with the Attorney General’s civil rights division, which will annually summarize any complaints received.

**Policy questions? Contact:**

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## The Safe Communities Act

H.3573 and S.1401

### STATEWIDE ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

ACLU of Massachusetts  
Act On Massachusetts  
American Academy of Pediatrics – Mass. Chapter  
American College of Physicians – Mass. Chapter  
American Friends Service Committee – New England  
American Immigration Lawyers Assn. New England Chapter  
American Jewish Committee – New England  
Amnesty International USA, Boston Field Office  
Anti-Defamation League (ADL) New England  
Better Future Project & 350 Massachusetts  
Committee for Public Counsel Services  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MA)  
Digital Fourth  
EMPath  
ForwardMA  
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization  
Haitian American Chamber of Commerce of Mass.  
Health Care for All  
Health Law Advocates, Inc.  
Indivisible Massachusetts  
International Institute of New England  
Jane Doe, Inc.  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)  
Jewish Family & Children’s Service  
Jewish Voice for Peace  
Latinos Unidos de Massachusetts  
Lawyers for Civil Rights  
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts  
Mass. Alliance of Portuguese Speakers  
Massachusetts Asian American Commission  
Massachusetts Bar Association  
Massachusetts Business Immigration Coalition  
Mass. Coalition for Adult Education  
Mass. Communities Action Network (MCAN)  
Mass. Educators of English Language Learners (MATSOL)  
Mass. Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)  
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
Massachusetts Teachers Association  
Massachusetts Voter Table  
Muslim Justice League  
National Association of Social Workers – MA  
National Organization for Women (NOW) MA  
Northeast Organic Farming Association – MA  
Oxfam America  
Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Mass.  
ProGente Connections / Episcopal Diocese of Mass.  
Project Citizenship  
Public Higher Education Network of Mass. (PHENOM)  
Progressive Massachusetts  
SEIU 1199  
SEIU 32BJ  
SEIU State Council  
The African Council (T.A.C.)  
United American Indians of New England (UAINE)  
UUMass Action  
Women’s Bar Association of Massachusetts  
Young Democrats of Massachusetts

**Note:** In addition to the statewide organizations listed above, more than 125 local and regional organizations have endorsed the Safe Communities Act as of July 15, 2020.