



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



Statement on Anti-Sanctuary Cities Legislation

May 8, 2017

Bishop Michael F. Olson of the Diocese of Fort Worth expressed concern and disappointment over Governor Greg Abbott's decision to sign into law the Senate Bill 4, known as the "anti-sanctuary cities" bill.

This anti-sanctuary cities bill allows local law enforcement to ask the immigration status of someone lawfully detained and withholds state funding from entities who do not comply with federal detainer requests. Throughout the legislative process, the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops has opposed this bill which punishes local entities for not enforcing complex federal law.

This law harms the common good because it fosters an attitude of suspicion of the legal status of all immigrants. It further places the burden of verification of legal status of everyone upon local law enforcement officials. This burden further complicates the already stressful responsibilities of officers who serve and protect our communities.

We should not be fooled into thinking that this law, in any way, resolves the complicated problems of our immigration system, problems that harm families and children. We must continue to advocate for more just and comprehensive immigration laws, which include reunification of families and creating more just pathways to citizenship. Enforcement measures should have the goal of targeting dangerous criminals for incarceration and deportation. SB 4 does not meet these standards.

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