

A MEASURED ATTACK ON SANCTUARY

November ballot will propose elimination of Oregon's sanctuary status

Nearly seven out of 10 Americans feel sympathetic toward undocumented immigrants in the United States, according to a June 2018 poll conducted by Gallup. However, when November comes, Oregonians will paint a clearer picture with a vote on Measure 105.

Measure 105 — formerly Initiative Petition 22 — seeks to repeal a state law forbidding state and local law enforcement from using state resources or personnel to detain anyone who has violated federal immigration law. Opposition to the anti-immigrant measure is already taking shape.

IP-22 grew into Measure 105 in July 2018, when “immigration reform” organizations submitted 110,445 signatures to the Oregon Secretary of State’s office. One of those organizations supporting the new measure is Oregon For Immigration Reform (OFIR), which says it will end Oregon as a “sanctuary state.”

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has categorized OFIR as an anti-immigrant hate group with ties to white supremacists. However, the organization wouldn’t comment to *EW* on the label, saying SPLC is “disruptive and has no dog in the fight.”

According to the office of the Secretary of State, two donors are the primary supporters of the campaign: OFIR and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). Currently, FAIR, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that aims to reduce “illegal immigration,” has contributed \$179,175 in-kind services. OFIR has donated \$39,500 in cash and \$95,361 in-kind.

The ballot measure has stirred opposition from many groups in Oregon. Oregonians United Against Profiling, a coalition of businesses, nonprofits and unions, gathered across the state to canvass local businesses on July 28.

Manuel Mejia-Gonzalez, a local community activist, led canvassing efforts in Eugene. He says the supporters of the measure have been thriving on misinformation out there.

“I don’t know any of my friends who would support this,” Mejia-Gonzalez says. “This is a clear off-the-Trump agenda. We know [the measure] is supported by Republicans. We know this is an attack. We feel it. It’s not just the Latinx community; we know there are people hurt and scared.”

Mejia-Gonzalez says he’s concerned that it would enable police to not only work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) but would also open a pathway for more local policy aimed at tougher restrictions on immigrants.

The Latinx community already has a strained relationship with law enforcement, so if the measure passes, leading to increased racial profiling, it would be tougher for people of color to work with police, he adds.

Jim Ludwick, OFIR’s communications director, says the measure is meant to fix a law that isn’t working.

“Rather than go to the Legislature to pass the bill, we have to do an initiative to overturn,” he says. “We shouldn’t have to do this. The state wants to pass laws that reward illegal aliens rather than citizens.”

Ludwick says he understands the measure’s language to mean that if a jail has a “criminal alien,” the facility should be proactive in notifying ICE. He adds that Oregon’s prisons have too many undocumented immigrants who wouldn’t be there they had been deported immediately after their first crime.

If this interpretation indeed were the intention of the measure, it would be unnecessary. Jails in Lane County already share data with ICE. Both Captain Clint Riley of Lane County Jail and Springfield Police Chief Rick Lewis have told *Eugene Weekly* in the past that it’s a federal regulation.

Ludwick says immigration should be managed better, and that the number of immigrants allowed in the state should be based on the national birth rate. His argument for immigration is rooted in population control masked as environmentalism: If too many immigrants enter the country, Ludwick says, it could result in increased demand for energy, degradation of nature and even deterioration of the U.S. culture.

Measure 105 has already made its way to the governor’s race. Gov. Kate Brown’s campaign tells *EW* that she opposes the measure. Her challenger, Republican State Rep. Knute Buehler, threw in his support.

Buehler has a track record of voting against undocumented immigrants, such as denying financial aid for undocumented students and allowing them to disclose immigration status.

“I see it as way to remove barriers between local and state law enforcement communicating, and cooperating with federal officials to keep Oregonians safe,” Buehler said in a statement to *EW*. “If the measure passes, as governor, I will support legislation that ensures that the immigrant community can feel safe in communicating with law enforcement about criminal activities.”

Oregon is one of seven states in the U.S. that has a law deemed to provide sanctuary status. Gov. Neil Goldschmidt signed the bill in 1987, and it passed with nearly unanimous support from legislators. ■

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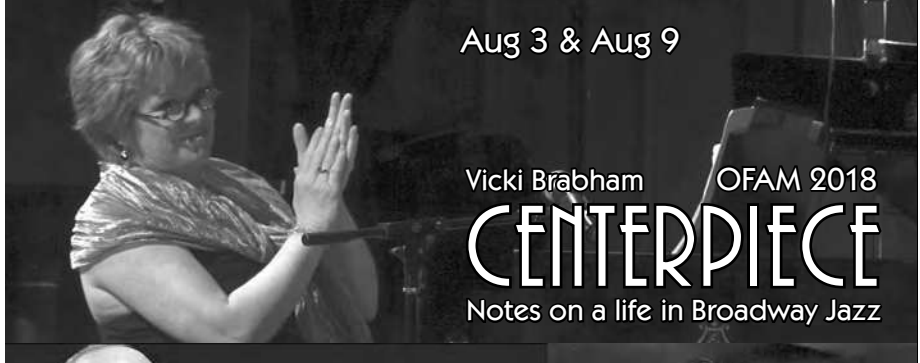
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