

# No sanctuary from anger

**As the fall campaign season ramps up during September, voters will be learning more about the candidates running for various leadership positions. U.S. Congress, the Oregon Legislature, county commissioners, city councils — they'll all be on the ballot.**

Oregon also has a long history of citizen initiatives. In the past, voters have had the opportunity to strike down tax policies, or review controversial policy choices the Legislature has made.

This November, the general election ballot will include Measure 105. This initiative proposes to throw out Oregon's "sanctuary" law, which initially passed more than 30 years ago with broad support from both Republicans and Democrats.

I had the word "sanctuary" in quotes, because it's a bit of a misnomer.

Let's get direct to the point. Law enforcement needs to be able to work with federal partners to deport hardened criminals. The sanctuary law does not prevent this in practice. We have heard from numerous law enforcement officials that they have a process to keep our neighborhoods and streets safe while building trust with the immigrant community so they feel safe reporting crimes.

The Trump Administration's hard line on all immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, has led many cities to use the sanctuary law as a shield against any federal enforcement. I think this is a mistake and has perpetuated a ballot measure that is a neat clever solution to a complicated issue.

## Purpose of the original bill

Rocky Barilla, a Democrat in the Oregon House of Representatives, sponsored the original bill. It was aimed at severing the relationship between local law enforcement and federal immigration law.

"No law enforcement agency of the State of Oregon or of any political subdivision of the state shall use agency moneys, equipment or personnel for the purpose of detecting or apprehending persons whose only violation of law is that they are persons

of foreign citizenship present in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws," was the intent of the law.

In discussing the bill with police and members of both parties, Barilla found local governments didn't want to spend money enforcing laws they didn't have to. The bill passed the Oregon Senate 29 to 1 and the House 58 to 1. Then-governor Neil Goldschmidt signed it into law on July 7, 1987.

The purpose was balance. Local police should focus on local issues. It is critical that the state hold people accountable who commit crimes. Another large consideration is to not put our hardworking law enforcement officials in a position where they could be accused of racial profiling or asking for immigration status documents.

Back in 2013, during the campaign to allow driving privileges for undocumented, I personally sat down with dozens of sheriffs and police chiefs to seek their counsel and guidance. Many said their primary concern was ending the perception of profiling.

## ONPAC endorsement process

Every two years, the Oregon Nurseries' Political Action Committee interviews candidates from both political parties, as well as the advocates for ballot measures. The support of Oregon's number one agricultural commodity is valuable and sought after. ONPAC is committed to supporting nursery- and greenhouse-friendly candidates. The committee also weighs in on ballot measures that have a bottom line impact on our diverse membership.

Candidly, it is a fantastic experience. We put political party affiliations aside and focus on solutions to vexing problems. We support those who wish to build a welcoming state and prosperous business climate.

During two full days in late July and August, issues such as workforce, regulations and taxes, natural resource protection and infrastructure as well as our contribution to the solution of climate change were on the table. Also on the table was the sanctuary measure.

The ONPAC chair is Kathy LeCompte of Brooks Tree Farm. During our deliberations, she reminded us that Oregon agriculture relies on an immigrant workforce. We all know that.



Jeff Stone  
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The solution to immigration policy rests with the United States Congress, which has failed to address it for more than 30 years. (Incidentally, it's been the same amount of time since Oregon passed its sanctuary bill.)

So where does Oregon fit in? Well, the state can do little to help agriculture on this issue — but it can do an awful lot to hurt.

Nobody supports hardened criminals in our streets, but our local law enforcement has tools to deal with them already, working with federal authorities as needed to deport them.

ONPAC members were pleased to hear that both conservative and progressive candidates see the value of a state that ignores the inflammatory rhetoric and the fear, and retains a thoughtful and measured approach.

## Coalitions spanning the political divide

I know that talking politics is about as appealing as bringing in a muddy pig into the kitchen. However, engagement matters, and elections have consequences.

We have built an excellent reputation as a fair-minded, solution-oriented industry. ONPAC is strongly opposed to Measure 105. We would urge all members to learn more. If you are reading this column outside the confines of the State of Oregon, be vigilant. These type of issues may be on your doorstep sooner than you think.

We have joined with law enforcement, immigrant rights advocates, religious leaders and others in the business community to send a message: this sanctuary law is not broken. The attempt to reverse it should be defeated.

Measure 105 perpetuates confusion and fear amongst the immigrant community and the workers we rely on. It is a distraction from a much-needed federal immigration reform effort. It sends the wrong message about Oregon. ©