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Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Opposition to HB 2771, Sheriff operating a jail for the enforcement of United States immigration and customs enforcement detainees
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs, Rep. Tom Kessler, Chair - February 25, 2026

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am the Executive Director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multifaith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” on a variety of important social and economic justice issues. We work with many of the Mainline denominations in Kansas, including the local judicatories of the ELCA Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church, as well as with hundreds of congregations and thousands of people of faith in Kansas. I rise today in opposition to HB 2771.

As I have at every hearing on immigration this session, I will start by quoting Exodus 22:21: “You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.” The Hebrew word “ger” often translated to “stranger,” really means “immigrant.”

I will also bring the following resolution from the United Church of Christ’s 2025 General Synod meeting, which says plain as day:

The [Church] calls upon all settings of the Church to **oppose** the Trump Administration’s immigration policies and **condemn** and **reject** ANY policies or actions that deny sanctuary, access to services, or human dignity to migrants, immigrants, and refugees, and BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] individuals. These actions include, but are not limited to, tribal, state, and local **law enforcement cooperation with ICE** and the use of public lands for immigrant detention facilities. [emphasis added]¹

The sacred texts of our faiths demand that we speak up for those who are silenced and to stand for our neighbors who live in the shadows of fear. KIFA, and the denominations and congregations that support it, have long cared for and about immigrants, defending them (as much as we could) against attack from the federal and state governments.

As a faith-based organization rooted in the inherent dignity of every human person, we view this proposal with profound moral concern. The two elements of the bill that cause us the most concern is the 48-hour hold upon presentation of an administrative (not a judicial) warrant, which raises Fourth Amendment concerns, and the clause that allows sheriffs to enter into 287(g) agreements without the consent of their county commissions, which undermines the core principle of civilian oversight.

Immigrants are already afraid to interact with law enforcement, and this will only make that problem worse. Having County Sheriffs act as an arm of immigration enforcement will undermine the trust and community relationships that police depend on to do their jobs, and will further endanger immigrants – documented or not – in situations such as theft or domestic violence. We are also concerned that this will lead to increased targeting of our neighbors by local law enforcement, based on their ethnicity.

¹ UCC [Resolution](#): “Calling The United Church of Christ to Oppose the 2025 Immigration Rollbacks and Support Immigrants, Refugees, and Pacific Island Communities, while Amplifying Antiracist Work On Behalf of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Response to the Current Socio-Political Backlash.”

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We have been greatly disturbed by the lawlessness and violence with which ICE has been acting. People in Minnesota, Chicago, Los Angeles and Memphis live in fear as federal agents have arrested U.S. citizens and legal residents, dragged children from their beds in the middle of the night, smashed car windows, and targeted and even shot protesters. ICE is entering private property without proper warrants and also is ignoring judges' orders about releasing detainees. What kind of "law enforcement agency" ignores judicial oversight?²

The core issue is that ICE is not a law enforcement agency in the way we have traditionally understood that term, but is rather a rogue agency beholden only to the president, essentially above the law, anonymous and heavily armed, causing chaos and terror in our cities, and using lethal force³ that in a legitimate agency would trigger an investigation at least. The federal government's enforcement operations are in ongoing violation of the First, Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Tenth Amendments to the US Constitution. We do not want to bring this to Kansas, so KIFA opposes any bill that would make that easier, including this one.

As people of faith, we believe that our public policy should be measured by how it treats the "stranger at our gates." This bill does the opposite: it weaponizes the bureaucracy of local law enforcement to cast a shadow of suspicion over Kansans who "don't have the right papers," many of whom are our congregants, our co-workers, and our neighbors, purely for the sake of federal immigration enforcement that is essentially a form of ethnic cleansing. While it is going on, we will do what we can to protect our immigrant neighbors, and part of that is opposing the ICE-ification of Kansas law enforcement.

We believe that history will not look kindly on this episode, and that it will go down with the Dred Scott decision and the Japanese internment as one of the most disgraceful episodes in US history.

Please vote NO on HB 2771.

Thank you.

² How ICE defies judges' orders to release detainees, step by step, Politico, Feb. 10, 2026
<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/02/10/ice-immigration-detention-court-orders-00771727>

³ "As ICE escalates its tactics, are federal agents truly 'untouchable' in the eyes of the law?", by Josh Campbell,
<https://www.cnn.com/2025/11/15/us/ice-federal-agents-immigration-force>, posted Nov. 15, 2025