



## DOUGLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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March 14, 2022

Rep. John Barker  
Chair  
Kansas House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Dear Chairman Barker,

My name is Suzanne Valdez, and I am the Douglas County District Attorney. I have been an attorney for 25 years and taught law at the University of Kansas more than 20 years. I am the co-author of the book "Prosecutorial Ethics."

At the Douglas County DA's Office, our mission is to create a safe and just community. With this in mind, I must wholeheartedly object to HB 2717 in language and intent.

U.S. residents who do not have federal documentation live in constant fear of being detained, dehumanized and deported back to the dire circumstances from which they fled. Because of this fear, these hard-working, foreign-born people are unlikely to contact law enforcement when they are victims of crime. I cannot condone actions that make my community less safe and further victimize survivors and witnesses of violence and property offenses.

Additionally, HB 2717 is another example of the continued overreach of the attorney general, who purports to support local control but cannot stop himself from meddling when local governments disagree with his anti-humanitarian views and pandering to racists. Our community has chosen to be a sanctuary city, reflecting the values of our residents.

As a society, we must invest in strengthening public trust of law enforcement. HB 2717 not only weakens that trust but leaves us all less safe while persecuting people whose only "offense" is wanting a better life for themselves and their families.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Valdez  
Douglas County District Attorney