



LETICIA CASTILLO

58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 1066 - Immigration services: grants.

IN BRIEF:

Assembly Bill 1066 clarifies the use of state-funded immigration services grants to ensure that grant funds are not used to obstruct federal enforcement actions against individuals convicted of felonies and present in the U.S. in violation of immigration laws. This bill is in direct response to the Governor's signing letter of SBX1-2, where he invited clarifying language to specify that no funds should be used for illegal immigrant violent or serious felons.

EXISTING LAW:

Existing law requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide grants to qualified nonprofit organizations to support immigration-related legal services, including assistance with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), naturalization, and other immigration benefits. Current law prohibits funds from being used for legal services to individuals convicted of violent or serious felonies.

THE ISSUE:

State-funded immigration assistance programs are designed to help individuals navigate complex legal pathways to secure lawful immigration status. However, there have been concerns that some funds may be used in ways that interfere with federal immigration enforcement, particularly in cases involving individuals with felony convictions. While the state has an interest in supporting immigrant communities, it also has a responsibility to ensure that public resources are not being used to shield individuals from lawful federal actions. This has raised accountability questions and the need for clearer guidelines to prevent potential misuse of grant funding. Providing transparency and ensuring that funds serve their intended purpose is essential for maintaining public trust in these programs and safeguarding the integrity of California's immigration assistance initiatives.

Public safety concerns have intensified due to rising crime rates affecting both legal and undocumented residents in California. Communities across the state have experienced an increase in violent crimes, including offenses committed by individuals with prior felony convictions. Ensuring that state-funded programs do not support individuals who pose a risk to public safety is a critical step in addressing these concerns. Strengthening regulations around the use of immigration services grants will help protect communities while maintaining the integrity of California's immigration support framework.

THE SOLUTION:

AB 1066 ensures that immigration services grants are used appropriately by explicitly prohibiting state funds from being used to obstruct federal enforcement against individuals convicted of felonies.

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