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Columbus Sues Trump Administration for Adding City to Sanctuary Cities Hit List Despite Columbus Never Declaring Itself a Sanctuary City

City Attorney Zach Klein says Trump administration actively seeking to withhold more than \$10 million in federal funding for justice and homeland security programs despite Columbus never declaring itself a sanctuary city

COLUMBUS, OH— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that the City has joined a lawsuit challenging the latest attempt by the Trump administration to punish so-called “sanctuary cities” by illegally withholding millions of dollars in federal funding for not being in lockstep with executive orders pertaining to the president’s immigration enforcement tactics.

This lawsuit follows the release of the administration’s so-called sanctuary cities list earlier this year, which included Columbus despite the city never declaring itself as a sanctuary city.

“President Trump’s sanctuary cities executive orders exemplify the administration’s unwillingness to act rationally,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“While we pride ourselves on being an open and accepting city, Columbus is not a sanctuary city. We’ve never been one. We comply with federal law. And yet, this administration is still threatening to withhold millions of dollars in funding based on nonsense. That’s why we fighting back against these attacks.”**

Columbus filed the lawsuit alongside several dozen other targeted cities after the Trump administration ordered the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to withhold funding and potentially criminally prosecute cities and local officials for failing to comply with new executive orders on immigration. The orders are similar to several signed during Trump’s first term, which multiple courts rejected as blatant and unconstitutional attempts to usurp legislative authority.

According to the lawsuit, Columbus has never declared itself a so-called sanctuary city, despite the Trump administration erroneously adding it to its list of cities targeted to have federal funding withheld.

If the courts allow the cuts to stand, Columbus could lose millions of dollars in federal funding through the DOJ and DHS, including \$4.1 million in DOJ grants to fund crime reduction initiatives, support survivors of domestic violence, fund addiction services, and prosecute violent and heinous crimes. The City could also lose \$7 million in DHS counterterrorism grant funding at a time when Central Ohio is increasingly becoming a national defense hub.

The impacts of these funding cuts could be significant for the City, forcing it to make difficult decisions on which programs to fund, which to cut and if tax levies would be necessary to fund essential services like police and fire.

**Editor's note: A copy of the lawsuit is attached.*

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