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**September 22, 2021**

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## **House Democrats React to Key Parts of “Anti-Sanctuary Cities” Law Being Struck Down in Federal Court**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** – Adding to a growing list of Republican-pushed legislation rebuked by the courts, a federal judge has struck down key provisions of Florida’s so-called “anti-sanctuary cities” law, citing they violate the Constitution. Problems with the bill were pointed out by Democrats, immigration advocates, and business leaders at the time. [When it passed](#) on the House floor, not a single Democrat voted for it. The bill had been a priority of **Governor DeSantis**.

“This ruling is a victory for Florida’s families and our constitutional rights. As Democrats said time and time again, SB168 undermines the safety of all Floridians, and our right to local control. I hope the Governor and my Republican colleagues in the legislature will work with leading advocacy organizations who serve vulnerable communities to keep us all safe, rather than keep passing unconstitutional laws in partnership with known far-right hate-groups,” said **Representative Anna Eskamani (D- Orlando)**.

For years, Florida House Democrats opposed this bill because it was unconstitutional and wrong— this ruling proves it. Floridians deserve a legislature that prioritizes people over politics, not one that repeatedly squanders taxpayer money defending extreme legislation designed to bolster the Governor’s political ambitions. Florida has and will always be an immigrant state. This ruling is no surprise and we are relieved to see this xenophobic law struck down,” said **Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith (D- Orlando)**.

**Representative Dotie Joseph (D- Miami)** added, “I consistently argued that SB 168 was motivated by unlawful discriminatory, had no real correlation to public safety, and was unconstitutional. By blocking SB 168’s prohibition on sanctuary policies and commandeering cooperation of local government law enforcement with federal immigration authorities, the court vindicated our concerns and found by “a preponderance of the evidence,” SB 168 has discriminatory or disparate effects on racial and ethnic minorities, and these discriminatory effects were both foreseeable

and known to the Legislature at the time of SB 168's enactment. The law was rooted in incendiary rhetoric painting a false narrative about immigrants being more dangerous than the general population, when in actuality, the opposite is true as immigrants are markedly less like to engage in criminal activity than native born citizens.

Notably, the Court acknowledged that some attacks on immigrants even extended to those who migrated legally. Specifically, the bill sponsor's "comments evince a belief that any non-citizen that is present in the United States should be subject to stricter laws in order to be permitted to live in the country."

As an immigrant and attorney myself, I want to reaffirm that immigrants are people too and should not be mistreated based on their race or national origin."

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