

# City opposes immigration enforcement

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Citing the threat to local control, the Los Angeles City Council came out Tuesday against a proposed federal law that would require police to enforce immigration laws.

The 13-0 council vote came at the request of Councilman Dennis Zine, who is scheduled to testify today in Washington, D.C., against HR2671, the Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal Act.

Under the measure, cities could lose federal grants if their police departments fail to enforce immigration laws.

Zine, who is one of the council's more conservative members and was a police officer for 33 years, said the measure represents a threat to the city.

"I don't think they are looking at the impact of this," Zine said of the measure introduced by Rep. Charlie Norwood, R-Ga. "This doesn't do much for our relationship with the diverse people we have in Los Angeles."

"It will turn our local law enforcement officers into immigration officers," he said. "What will that do to our efforts on community policing?"

However, Norwood spokesman Duke Hipp said the congressman believes local law enforcement is needed to help beef up the work of federal immigration authorities.

"Our immigration system is broken and something needs to be done," Hipp said.

"We aren't talking about people who run a red light. We are talking about murderers, rapists and people who have been doing hard time," he said. "Instead of being deported, they are on the streets of our city."

The city's **Special Order 40**, adopted under former Los Angeles police Chief Daryl F. Gates, has been controversial since it took effect in 1979. It prevents police from asking the immigration status of crime victims or anyone reporting criminal activity. Only after a person is arrested and charged with a crime is his citizenship questioned.

Dan Stein of the Federation for American Immigrant Reform said Special Order 40 and similar regulations in other cities obstruct federal law.

"These kind(s) of noncooperation standards should be illegal," Stein said. "It's an outrageous position by a city. If they don't want to be part of the federal union, they ought to start a nullification effort.

"The real issue is, these people shouldn't be here. We have a way for people to (emigrate) to the country."

City Council members, however, said neither Norwood nor FAIR understood the city's problems.

"This isn't about Special Order 40," said Councilman Greig Smith, another conservative member and LAPD reserve officer. "This is about local control. The federal government has no business telling us how we should police our city."

Councilman Ed Reyes said the federal proposal could create worse problems in the city.

"Don't think that just because you live in a different part of the city ... you won't be affected," said Reyes, who represents a Westlake-Lincoln Heights district.

"There will be a ripple effect," he said. "The bottom line is we have people, families, who are being abused by their landlords, by gang members, by vultures taking advantage of them. They are told that if they complain, they will be deported." "We have a whole subculture out there who are abusing immigrants who work hard and are paying their taxes," Reyes said.

Councilman Tony Cardenas said he believed the federal measure could lead to chaos.

"This will create an atmosphere where people will live in fear, only to be victimized by people who want to take advantage of them," Cardenas said.