

Raul Labrador's Weekly Newsletter

The last words Jim Steinle heard from his daughter were, "Help me, Dad."

Kathryn Steinle was walking arm-in-arm with her father on the San Francisco waterfront when she was killed by a gunshot to the chest. Juan Francisco Lopez Sanchez is charged in the July 1 shooting, a preventable tragedy that has captured worldwide attention.

Sanchez was on Pier 12 because of lax border security. He'd already been convicted of seven felonies, including heroin possession, manufacturing narcotics and illegal re-entry. Five times, Sanchez was deported to Mexico.

There should have been a sixth. Instead, Sanchez was released from jail in April, after the city ignored a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) request that he be detained for pickup. San Francisco is among over 200 "sanctuary cities" refusing to cooperate with the federal government in the enforcement of immigration law.

Thursday morning, I listened to Mr. Steinle tell the horrific story of his 32-year-old daughter's death at a hearing of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security.

Speaking with uncommon composure, he urged Congress to act. "We're going to carry forward with this and, hopefully, some good will come from Kate's death."

Thursday afternoon, the House took a step in the right direction, passing the Enforce the Law for Sanctuary Cities Act. The bill cuts off federal law enforcement grants to jurisdictions that ignore U.S. immigration law.

The problem runs far deeper, however. The Obama Administration's brazen neglect of border security presents systemic risk to public safety.

The Administration says state and local law enforcement shouldn't be forced into cooperating with federal authorities, calling detainer requests "discretionary." The result is a perverse system where illegal immigrants have greater protections than citizens.

Consequently, law-abiding Americans are victimized. In 2014, 12,000 ICE detainment holds were not honored. In just nine months, 25 percent of those reoffended.

Even when it has criminals in custody, ICE releases them. In fiscal 2014, ICE set free 30,558 criminal aliens. Already, 1,423 of those have been convicted of new offenses, including vehicular homicide and sexual assault.

The Administration repeatedly claims our borders are secure, that Americans are safe. That's a blatant falsehood. There's only one reason Mr. Sanchez is behind bars again: He committed yet another crime, the killing of Kate Steinle. Thank God he was caught!

Thank you,

Raul R. Labrador