



State of California
Office of the Attorney General

ROB BONTA
ATTORNEY GENERAL

June 29, 2026

Todd Blanche
Acting U.S. Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Washington, DC 20530

RE: U.S. Department of Justice Section 1373 Communications

Dear Acting U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche:

I am compelled to write to address the U.S. Department of Justice's most recent attempt to bully California's state and local governments into assisting the federal government in its draconian civil immigration enforcement agenda. I understand that, in the past week, the U.S. Department of Justice's (U.S. DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) sent communications to various state and local entities within the State of California that applied for OJP grants requiring applicants to certify their compliance with 8 U.S.C. § 1373 (hereinafter, the "Section 1373 Communications"). In the Section 1373 Communications, OJP challenged whether the applicants' certifications of compliance were "inadvertent" and whether the applicants could in fact comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373 due to the U.S. DOJ's designation of California as a "sanctuary" jurisdiction, while demanding a response by Tuesday, June 30, 2026. OJP implies that California law violates 8 U.S.C. § 1373. As you know, such a claim is false and applicants' compliance with California law does not interfere with their compliance with 8 U.S.C. § 1373.

To be sure, California has enacted statutes which limit how state and local agency resources may be used for federal civil immigration enforcement activities. The State made this decision because it determined, based on experience, empirical evidence, and its considered judgment, that entanglement with immigration enforcement threatens trust between the State and its residents—trust that is critical for the State to fulfill its responsibility to provide for the safety, health, and welfare of all the people it serves.

U.S. DOJ has sought to advance an expansive interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1373 in trying to invalidate the State's laws in court before. And U.S. DOJ has tried withholding grant funding from the State based on U.S. DOJ's specious interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1373. U.S. DOJ has lost every single time. The Ninth Circuit has held, on multiple occasions, that California's laws do "not conflict with § 1373." *City & Cnty. of San Francisco v. Barr*, 965 F.3d 753, 757 (9th Cir.

The Honorable Todd Blanche

June 29, 2026

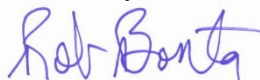
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2020); see also *City & Cnty. of San Francisco v. Garland*, 42 F.4th 1078, 1085 (9th Cir. 2022) (“We have rejected DOJ’s interpretation of Section 1373 repeatedly Our precedential interpretation of Section 1373 dispelled any purported conflict between the federal provision and [California’s] laws.”); *United States v. California*, 921 F.3d 865, 893 (9th Cir. 2019). And the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California issued a final judgment declaring that California’s “TRUST, TRUTH, Values Act, and Shield Confidentiality Statutes comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373.” Dkt. No. 154, *California v. Sessions*, No. 3:17-cv-4701 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2018).

I understand that the Administration does not agree with California’s decision to limit state and local law enforcement resources from being used for civil immigration enforcement activities. But the law is clear—this is California’s choice to make, and California’s laws are consistent with 8 U.S.C. § 1373. Not only do the Section 1373 Communications disregard clear and established law and judgments the State has obtained, through its actions, U.S. DOJ jeopardizes the vital public safety purposes that these grants are intended to serve, including combatting firearms and other violent crimes and investigating, prosecuting, and preventing hate crimes.

I demand that OJP and any component of U.S. DOJ cease issuing such communications to state and local entities in California and immediately issue a rescission of the Section 1373 Communications to all state and local entities in California that received them. If OJP takes any adverse action against a state or local entity on the basis that the State’s laws do not comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1373, my office stands ready to take legal action consistent with the final judgment entered against the U.S. Department of Justice in *California v. Sessions* and seek any further relief necessary, including pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2202.

Sincerely,



ROB BONTA
Attorney General

cc – Maureen Henneberg, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs