

# **Racial Justice in Multilingual Education**



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# Sanctuary Under Siege: Examining Sanctuary Promises in a Time of Racialized Immigration Enforcement

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## Abstract

Since the start of President Donald Trump's second term on January 20, 2025, immigration enforcement policies have intensified, leading to an escalation in racial and linguistic profiling, particularly in "blue" states and cities that primarily vote democrat and have sanctuary policies. This policy brief examines the immediate impact of these enforcement measures on multilingual and immigrant communities and educational spaces, highlighting contradictions between federal and state policies. Drawing from firsthand accounts, including the wrongful detainment of a U.S. citizen mother and her daughter outside a convenience store, alongside xenophobic rhetoric and school district responses, this policy brief explores the role of raciolinguistic surveillance in shaping discriminatory practices as it relates to the increased immigration enforcement. The report concludes with policy recommendations aimed at strengthening protections for multilingual and immigrant communities against the resurgence of racialized immigration enforcement.

**Keywords:** Sanctuary States, Immigration, Raciolinguistic Surveillance

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## Background

January 2025, the start of the Trump administration's second term, marked an intensification of immigration enforcement policies across the United States, including in cities and states that have sanctuary policies. There is a renewed emphasis on interior enforcement, mass deportations, restrictions on asylum, and executive orders

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that challenge birthright citizenship (Kuang, 2025). These executive orders reactivated large-scale Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations, expanded interior enforcement, and revised programs like 287(g) agreements that deputize local law enforcement to act as immigration agents. Issued in February 2025, the executive orders have authorized ICE enforcement to increase arrests in response to the “invasion” that is occurring in the nation (Aramayo et al., 2025). Such language deliberately “others” certain immigrant communities, fueling dehumanization of racialized communities. For example, during the same month of February the administration announced a new refugee program specifically for White South Africans, while indefinitely suspending other U.S. refugee admissions (Gumede, 2025; Drenon, 2025). This group includes Afrikaners and other descendants of European settlers who, regardless of ancestry, are proficient in both Afrikaans and English. The Trump administration has justified this decision to accept Afrikaners refugees in the U.S. because they are facing a “genocide;” however, such claims are widely discredited and have been denied by South Africa (Drenon, 2025). While thousands of civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been killed by armed militias and nearly 100,000 have been displaced as reported by the United Nations, a refugee quoted in Drenon’s (2025) article commented “It’s not fair. There are 120,000 refugees who went through the whole process, the vetting, the security, the medical screenings. We’ve waited for years, but now these [Afrikaners] are just processed in like three months” (Drenon, 2025). This stark contrast in treatment illustrates how race and language intersect to define who the Trump Administration is constructing as part of an “invasion” requiring barriers and removal, and who is welcomed as deserving protection within the United States.

At the same time during the wave of anti-immigrant rhetoric, the dismantling of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in schools by threatening to remove Title I funding (Mehta, 2025), have further emboldened racially and linguistically discriminatory practices. The administration has prioritized policies that disproportionately affect racialized, immigrant, and multilingual communities (Agathocleous et al., 2024). Taken together, these measures signal a profound retrenchment of civil rights protections and deepen the systemic marginalization of racialized immigrant and non-immigrant multilingual communities alike across the nation.

Raciolinguistic ideologies recognize that race and language are not simply separate categories of identity; rather, they intersect in ways that mark certain bodies and voices as suspect, foreign, or undeserving of belonging (Flores & Rosa, 2015). This framework explains how multilingual speakers—particularly Black, Latine, Asian, and Indigenous communities—are often policed not only for how they look but for how they sound, what language they use, and when and where they use it. The wrongful detainment based on language and race has been pervasive (Barrón-López et al

2025), so much so that a federal judge ruled in July 2025 that ICE cannot rely solely on race, language, or job location as grounds for reasonable suspicion to conduct detention stops (Helsel, 2025). While individual incidents of profiling highlight the human impact of these raciolinguistic ideologies, raciolinguistic surveillance is much more than isolated encounters. In this policy brief, raciolinguistic surveillance praxis operates structurally through policies, policing practices, institutional routines, and public discourse that normalize suspicion toward racialized multilingual communities.

The effects of raciolinguistic surveillance has emerged in varied ways. While the federal ICE policies target immigrant and multilingual communities nationwide, the impacts are especially complex in “blue” cities and states, including those that publicly claim “sanctuary” status. It was reported that based on an analysis of ICE arrest data, 59% of ICE arrests in “red states” occur in jails and prisons, while 70% of ICE arrests in “blue states” occur in the community (Tolan & Chapman, 2025), including on the street and workplace raids (Boyanton, 2025), demonstrating a strategic approach to instill fear within blue states that have sanctuary policies. Sanctuary policies are intended to limit local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, protecting immigrant communities from racialized policing and unjust detention (University of California at Santa Barbara [UCSB], 2017). Yet, the implementation of these protections often reveals stark contradictions. The same government entities that affirm sanctuary values may be composed of local municipalities that enter into formal agreements with ICE or tolerate informal local police cooperation that undermines community trust, thus rendering sanctuary states and cities sanctuary in name only.

New York serves as a powerful case study of this tension. On paper, the state has positioned itself as a leader in immigrant rights, with measures such as Executive Order 170 that instruct state agencies not to inquire about or disclose immigration status except when legally required (Exec. Order No. 170.1, 2018). However, in practice, counties in New York like Nassau County on Long Island have engaged in 287(g) contracts, empowering local police to share information and make immigration-related arrests without judicial warrants (Lewis, 2025). These contradictions expose multilingual and racialized communities to heightened surveillance and criminalization—often justified through raciolinguistic surveillance that equate non-English language use with “illegality.” Raciolinguistic surveillance is not limited to isolated encounters between ICE and suspected undocumented individuals; it operates as a system of structural practices embedded in policies, policing routines, and public discourse that normalize the suspicion, detainment, and deportation of racialized multilingual speakers.

The conflict between federal and state policies is not unique to New York. The Trump administration has sent tactical ICE teams to sanctuary cities including Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles among others (Snyder et al., 2025). Similar challenges play out in sanctuary cities and states across the country, where policies that promise

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protection are weakened by inconsistent enforcement, local complicity, and the enduring power of raciolinguistic surveillance. Understanding how these forces intersect is critical for strengthening protections for immigrant and multilingual communities—and for advancing racial and linguistic justice nationwide.

## **Analysis**

This section examines the underlying structures and contradictions that sustain raciolinguistic surveillance and weaken sanctuary promises.

### ***Defining Sanctuary States: Policy Promises and Contradictions***

A sanctuary state is a recent concept and very little information describing it exists compared to “sanctuary cities” (University of California at Santa Barbara [UCSB], 2017; National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2019.). However, a sanctuary state in the U.S. is best understood as a jurisdiction that, through a combination of laws, executive orders, and administrative policies, intentionally limits its cooperation with federal immigration authorities such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) (UCSB, 2017). These limitations are not merely symbolic—they are enacted through concrete policy decisions that restrict how state and local agencies engage with immigration enforcement efforts. In this way, the term “sanctuary state” becomes operationally defined not just by a political stance, but by a constellation of measurable, enforceable practices aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of all residents, regardless of immigration status.

At the core of sanctuary policy is a commitment to non-cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, particularly in ways that would compromise the safety and trust of immigrant communities. For example, sanctuary states typically prohibit local law enforcement from honoring ICE detainer requests unless a judicial warrant is presented. They may also restrict the sharing of sensitive information—such as immigration status, home addresses, or release dates—from public institutions like schools, hospitals, and courts with immigration authorities. Furthermore, sanctuary states often refuse to allocate local or state resources for immigration enforcement activities and may bar immigration agents from entering public facilities without proper documentation. These states may also adopt inclusive policies that enhance the rights and access of undocumented residents, such as granting access to driver’s licenses or in-state tuition, regardless of legal status. Examples of sanctuary states include California, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington as these states limit local law enforcement’s cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. States that are considered anti-sanctuary have enacted laws compelling local agencies to cooperate with federal immigration authorities such as Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Texas, and West Virginia.

New York State serves as an interesting case study of a state's sanctuary policies not always aligning with practices. Executive Order 170, signed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on January 25, 2017 (Governor.ny.gov, n.d.), represents a pivotal moment in New York State's assertion of its sanctuary policies amidst growing federal immigration enforcement during the first Trump administration. The order directs all New York State agencies and officers to refrain from inquiring about or disclosing an individual's immigration status unless explicitly required to do so by law with a judicial subpoena. This directive was issued as a protective measure in response to the Trump administration's intensification of immigration enforcement during his first term and reflects New York's commitment to safeguarding the rights and dignity of all its residents, regardless of immigration status. Executive Order 170 ensures that state services—such as healthcare, education, and public safety—remain accessible to immigrant communities without fear of exposure to federal authorities. By prohibiting questions about immigration status during the provision of these services and restricting the disclosure of such information, the order aims to build trust between immigrant residents and state institutions. Importantly, the order does not preclude the use of immigration-related information when it is explicitly required to determine eligibility for specific programs or when mandated by federal law. However, in the absence of such requirements, state personnel are instructed to treat immigration status as irrelevant and protected.

The issuance of Executive Order 170 marked a significant policy stance that decoupled state-level public service delivery from federal immigration enforcement. It operationalized New York's role as a sanctuary state by reinforcing the idea that local governance should not serve as an extension of federal immigration policy. In doing so, it sought to mitigate the chilling effect that aggressive federal actions had on immigrant communities and ensured that access to essential services remained uninhibited by fear or discrimination. However, right after the re-election of Trump, it was reported that New York Governor Kathy Hochul drew a distinction between New York City's sanctuary laws protecting undocumented immigrants and measures at the state level, "Our sanctuary policies are different... there are no barriers to law enforcement to work with federal government on immigration" (Lewis, 2024). This statement from Governor Hochul illustrates how the state's current leadership is backing away from fully upholding the intent of NYS Executive Order 170. By signaling openness to local law enforcement cooperation with ICE, the administration risks undermining the trust-building and community protections that EO 170 was designed to guarantee. This shift highlights a deeper contradiction: New York's sanctuary policies remain on paper, but in practice, the political will to defend them has weakened—leaving multilingual and immigrant communities vulnerable to raciolinguistic surveillance and discriminatory enforcement.

## ***Contradictions in Sanctuary Policies***

New York remains a sanctuary state, yet recent months have exposed the limitations of its protections in the face of heightened federal enforcement. Despite state policies such as Executive Order 170, Nassau County within Long Island, New York has charged local law enforcement (i.e. Nassau Police Department) to cooperate with ICE to provide information on individuals suspected of immigration violations and help enforce federal immigration enforcement. Nassau County PD and ICE contract known as 287(g) was signed on March 10, 2025, deputizing officers with broad authority to question residents' citizenship status and make arrest without a judicial warrant, an agreement that was discontinued over a decade ago under President Obama's administration (Lewis, 2025). This policy shift has disproportionately affected multilingual communities of color, contributing to a climate of fear where residents avoid interactions with law enforcement and reports indicate that arrests have surged in Latine-majority neighborhoods, where ICE agents have intensified their patrols. These interactions are reminiscent of the "stop and frisk" policies in New York City that disproportionately targeted racialized minorities. Examples of such experiences are discussed below.

## ***Raciolinguistic Surveillance Where Sanctuary Should Exist***

**Racial and Linguistic Profiling in Public Spaces.** The increase in immigration enforcement has included an ambitious deportation initiative under which people have been deported to a notorious mega-prison in El Salvador against a judge's orders, as well as revoking visas from over a thousand university students, and offering undocumented immigrants a sum of \$1,000 each to "self-deport" through a series of television commercials (Drenon, 2025). The Trump administration has defended its actions by suggesting that many of those being forced from the country are either violent criminals or threaten America's interests. However, the "New Sanctuary Movement," a Philadelphia nonprofit, claims that most of these immigration detainments aren't targeting hardened criminals (Snyder et al., 2025). As Peter Pedemonti from the New Sanctuary Movement stated:

*It's fathers being taken and leaving a kid behind. There are mothers being taken. These are families trying to make it. These are the people you go to church with, who your kids go to school with, and so the crises is not immigration. The crisis is ICE terrorizing people. The crisis is a president who is militarizing cities (Snyder et al., 2025).*

Narratives like the above counter the claims often made by the Trump administration that ICE operations focus on violent and dangerous criminals, when in reality many of those targeted have no offense beyond their undocumented status. In other cases, those targeted may only be due to their perceived documented status.

Recent accounts suggest that ICE agents have increasingly relied on racial and linguistic profiling to identify potential undocumented immigrants. A particularly disturbing case occurred in March 2025, when a mother and her daughter were detained outside a convenience store in Nassau County, Long Island, New York while conversing in Spanish (Personal Communication). The following vignette retells the story told by the mother to the school the follow day so that her daughter's teachers are aware of the emotional state of her child. The names of the mother and daughter have been changed for anonymity.

*It was a Sunday morning in March in Nassau County when Marisol and her 12-year-old daughter, Ana, stopped at a local convenience store to purchase balloons. When they left with balloons in hand, Marisol was talking to her daughter in Spanish and reached for her car door, a hand grabbed her wrist roughly. Startled, Marisol let the balloons go and as the balloons few away, a man in plain clothes flashed a badge—ICE—and barked, "Show me your papers." Ana's eyes widened, fear blooming in her chest. "What's going on?" she asked in English. The agent ignored her. His focus remained fixed on Marisol. For several tense minutes, mother and daughter were detained on the sidewalk—questioned, searched, made to feel like criminals. Their only crime? Speaking Spanish and having brown skin as both mother and daughter are U.S. citizens. In a country they had always called home, a simple morning errand had become a reminder that their language—and the way they looked—could be used against them.*

Both the mother and daughter are U.S. citizens, but their detainment was based solely on their use of Spanish and perceived racial identity. With the absence of any judicial warrant, such incidents highlight how raciolinguistic surveillance—where speaking a language other than English and being a person of color is equated with unlawful presence—continue to shape enforcement actions. It also represents the contradiction of a broader philosophy of immigrant integration and public safety, emphasizing that local law enforcement should not be weaponized for federal immigration enforcement, especially in ways that foster racial profiling and community distrust. The contradictions in state sanctuary policies like in New York are matters that affect the wellbeing of diverse, multilingual, and racially minoritized populations.

**Social Media and Public Xenophobia.** The resurgence of anti-immigrant rhetoric during the early months of the Trump administration's second term has exacerbated racial tensions and contributed to an atmosphere of hostility and fear within immigrant communities. One particularly disturbing example emerged from Suffolk County, Long Island—a region with a significant number of Latine and multilingual immigrant communities. In March 2025, a social media post circulated widely online regarding signage posted in heavily populated immigrant and Latine populations, originating from a community organization claiming to act in the interest of "public



safety.” The post urged residents to “report illegal aliens” in highly sensitive and traditionally protected public spaces, including schools, places of worship, workplaces, restaurants, and neighborhoods.

As depicted in Figure 1, the stark, bold-font image resembles a public notice and uses militarized, dehumanizing language that reduces immigrant individuals to criminalized identities. The call to surveil and report people based on perceived immigration status is deeply troubling—not only because of its implicit racism and xenophobia, but also because it emboldens community members to engage in vigilante-style enforcement. The message is clear: anyone who appears “foreign,” speaks a language other than English, or otherwise does not conform to white, monolingual norms is a suspect.



**Figure 1.** Sign Posted within an Immigrant Community

This kind of rhetoric plays directly into what scholars identify as raciolinguistic ideologies—the notion that race and language intersect to mark individuals as “other” or “illegitimate” (Flores & Rosa, 2015). In this context, language becomes a proxy for race, and public spaces are turned into sites of surveillance and exclusion. The circulation of such messages not only fosters a culture of suspicion and fear but also increases the likelihood of wrongful reporting and unwarranted immigration enforcement actions, particularly in sanctuary states like New York.

Moreover, the timing and location of this message amplify its harmful effects. Long Island has a well-documented history of anti-immigrant policing, making such rhetoric

especially dangerous in the current political climate (Smith, 2011). While state policies such as Executive Order 170 explicitly prohibit the use of state resources for immigration enforcement and affirm the rights of all residents to access services without fear, public messaging like that seen in Figure 1 directly undermines these protections by inciting fear and normalizing racial profiling at the community level. This incident underscores the urgent need for public education campaigns, community-based protections, and proactive leadership from local governments to counteract the resurgence of nativist discourse and reaffirm the humanity and dignity of immigrant residents.

**Raciolinguistic Surveillance as Structural Practice.** Federal programs like 287(g) agreements embed raciolinguistic surveillance into local policing by training officers to question, detain, and refer people to ICE based on subjective judgments about language use and perceived nationality—often without judicial oversight (The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 2025). In schools, public signage and community-level reporting systems can turn everyday language use into grounds for scrutiny, inviting residents to monitor and report neighbors who “sound foreign” or “speak the wrong language.” This transforms public spaces into sites of linguistic policing and fear. The effect is cumulative: when local law enforcement, schools, and community members act as extensions of federal immigration enforcement, they legitimize raciolinguistic surveillance as routine. Multilingual families begin to self-police their language in public to avoid drawing attention; students become targets for bullying tied to perceived immigration status; and trust in public institutions erodes.

Understanding these structural dynamics is essential for designing policy interventions that do more than offer symbolic sanctuary. True protection for immigrant and multilingual communities requires actively dismantling the raciolinguistic logics that render them perpetually suspect—whether they are buying balloons outside a convenience store or speaking their home language on school grounds.

### **Reaffirming Sanctuary Policies**

Unlike the Nassau County Police Department, New York State public schools cannot be weaponized as agents of immigration control. In response to intensified immigration enforcement under the Trump administration’s second term, the New York State Education Department (NYSED), in partnership with the Office of the New York State Attorney General, and the Office of the Governor, issued a reaffirmation of their longstanding commitment to safeguarding immigrant students’ rights. In a memorandum entitled New York State Guidance on Safeguarding the Rights of Immigrant Students (Office of the New York State Attorney General [OAG] et al., 2025), Attorney General Letitia James, Governor Kathy Hochul, and Commissioner of Education Betty Rosa jointly clarified the legal obligations of school districts under both federal and state law. This guidance emphasizes that public schools must remain

safe havens for all students, including noncitizen and undocumented students, and outlines concrete procedures to protect students from unauthorized immigration enforcement actions.

The memorandum reiterates that school districts may not deny enrollment to students based on national origin, immigration status, race, or language proficiency. Any practice that discourages immigrant students from registering, including the collection of immigration-related information at the point of enrollment, is deemed discriminatory and may expose school districts to legal liability (OAG et al., 2025). Schools are explicitly prohibited from requesting Social Security numbers or documents that reveal immigration status during registration.

Further, the memorandum reinforces that schools are not required to comply with federal immigration authorities' nor local police requests for student information unless they are accompanied by a judicial warrant or lawfully issued subpoena, as dictated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). School Resource Officers (SROs), who may be stationed on campuses, are also forbidden from using school records to access immigration-related data and may not detain or question students about their status. The memorandum makes clear that immigration status is not relevant to school safety or discipline and does not justify any enforcement action on school grounds.

In cases where federal immigration agents attempt to access school property, schools are instructed to follow a strict legal protocol: deny access unless there is a legitimate and imminent safety concern or a judicial order, contact district legal counsel and superintendents, and notify parents or guardians immediately. Figure 2 reflects a protocol established by Eastern Suffolk BOCES in Suffolk County, Long Island.

# Immigration Enforcement on School Grounds

- 1** Meet the immigration agent at the school entrance, where all visitors are screened for entry.
- 2** At the entrance, request the agent's name and ID, and the reason for the visit during school hours.
- 3** Ensure the school's security guard notifies their supervisor(s), as appropriate.
- 4** School security shall not provide the agent with any information regarding a particular student without express authorization to do so from administration.
- 5** Direct the agent to the Superintendent's Office or another appropriate administrator designated by the Superintendent.  
The Superintendent or designee should then request:
  - The agent's credentials,
  - Supervisor contact information
  - Any documentation from the agent (e.g., subpoena, search warrant, arrest warrant, or written authorization to enter the school grounds)
- 6** Inform the agent that protocols require notifying and obtaining guidance from legal counsel.
- 7** Ask the agent to wait while you seek guidance from legal counsel.
- 8** Contract legal counsel and provide them with the details and documentation obtained from the agent.
- 9** If the agent refuses to follow such instructions, do not physically intervene in any enforcement action. Instead, gather as much information as possible from the agent and notify the legal counsel and security supervisors.

**Figure 2.** Protocol for Immigration Enforcement on School Grounds

These measures ensure that schools do not become inadvertent participants in federal immigration operations and help to protect the constitutional and civil rights of students. Finally, the memorandum calls on school districts to incorporate protections for immigrant students into their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with law enforcement, and to adopt internal policies that prohibit sharing or acting on immigration-related information unless required by law. These actions are designed not only to protect student rights but also to cultivate a school climate where all students—regardless of immigration status—can access education free from fear, surveillance, and discrimination. It is important to note that the above protections exist for all students in all schools across the country, even those with anti-sanctuary policies as these protections are based on federal laws for students. However, the dissemination of the joint memorandum from state leaders reaffirms New York's role as a sanctuary for immigrant youth and emphasizes the educational, legal, and ethical duty of schools to shield students from the overreach of federal immigration enforcement.

## ***Student Dignity and Bullying***

The joint memorandum also devotes a critical section to addressing bullying and harassment based on actual or perceived immigration status. Under both state and federal law—including the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act—New York schools are legally obligated to maintain environments free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying related to race, ethnicity, national origin, or immigration status.

This guidance is not merely theoretical; it reflects urgent realities on the ground. In February 2025, Jocelynn Rojo Carranza, an 11-year-old student from Texas, tragically died by suicide after enduring sustained bullying related to her family’s undocumented immigration status (Faheid & Park, 2025). Her death has shaken school communities across the nation and underscores the deadly consequences of unchecked xenophobia and racialized bullying within educational settings.

The memorandum calls on school districts to develop clear policies for preventing and responding to such behavior. These include mandatory staff training, the integration of anti-bullying content into the curriculum, and swift reporting mechanisms for any incidents of harassment. Schools are also required to take proactive steps to protect vulnerable students from peer abuse that targets immigration status, ensuring their emotional and psychological safety. In light of Jocelynn’s death, this guidance takes on even greater moral weight. It compels educators, administrators, and policymakers to recognize that the climate of fear produced by both federal immigration policy and local anti-immigrant sentiment extends into the lived experiences of children. Protecting immigrant students must involve not only shielding them from enforcement actions, but also confronting the everyday interpersonal violence they face from peers—a violence exacerbated by national rhetoric and local complicity.

### **Policy Recommendations**

First, states and local governments must take decisive steps to end complicity in immigration detention. Legislative efforts such as “Dignity Not Detention Act” (New York State Senate, 2025a) and “Dignity for Immigrants in New York State” (New York State Senate, 2025b) can prohibit local or state agencies from renewing contracts with ICE and shut down the pipeline that funnels racialized and multilingual residents into detention. Local governments can also terminate 287(g) agreements, which empower local police to act as immigration agents without proper oversight. Ending these collaborations will directly reduce the racialized policing of immigrant communities and begin to restore trust between marginalized residents and local institutions.

Equally critical is the need to protect schools as true safe zones, free from the reach of federal immigration enforcement. School districts and boards of education should

adopt and publicly share clear protocols that outline how to respond if ICE attempts to access school grounds—requiring judicial warrants, contacting district legal counsel, and notifying families immediately. These commitments must be written into state and district policies and memoranda of understanding with local law enforcement to ensure that schools do not become extensions of federal immigration control. Training staff, educating students and families about their rights, and communicating these policies in multiple languages will help rebuild trust and demonstrate a commitment to educational equity and safety for all. The NYS Memorandum (OAG, et al., 2025) can serve as a model of how state leaders can articulate and disseminate the federal laws that protect students regardless of immigration status.

Ensuring actual sanctuary for immigrant communities also demands that communities actively counter raciolinguistic surveillance, which too often goes unchecked under the guise of public safety. Community-based organizations and legal advocates should systematically document and report cases where language use, especially by racially minoritized speakers, becomes grounds for profiling or wrongful detention. At the same time, local ordinances and state anti-profiling laws must be strengthened to explicitly include language as a protected category alongside race and national origin. These local actions should be supported by pressure on the U.S. Department of Justice and state attorneys general to investigate and intervene when raciolinguistic policing becomes institutionalized.

Finally, meaningful change requires a sustained investment in public education and public discourse that exposes how language is weaponized to criminalize racialized communities. Educators, journalists, and community advocates can lift up stories like that of Marisol and Ana—whose everyday use of Spanish as racially minoritized individuals triggered their wrongful detainment—to illustrate the human toll of these contradictions. By connecting local stories to national campaigns, communities can build broad coalitions that push back against policies that pit race and language against citizenship and belonging. Similar to the “New Sanctuary Movement,” national advocacy networks and coalitions also play a vital role in linking these local and state-level efforts, amplifying community stories, and building collective power to challenge raciolinguistic surveillance wherever it takes root.

Across these recommendations, success should be measured not just by the policies written on paper but by real indicators of change: the number of ICE detention contracts canceled; the decline of local cooperation agreements; clear, trusted protocols that keep students safe at school; and a reduction in documented profiling cases that target language and race. Above all, progress will show in renewed trust—families who feel safe speaking their languages, students who know schools will protect them, and communities who see sanctuary not as empty rhetoric but as an everyday reality.

## Conclusion

The intensification of immigration enforcement under the current administration has laid bare the contradictions that can exist within so-called sanctuary spaces. As the discussed examples from New York demonstrates, symbolic protections are not enough when local complicity and raciolinguistic surveillance continue to expose immigrant and multilingual communities to fear, profiling, and detention. Stories like Marisol and Ana's remind us that everyday language use—something that should be celebrated—can become grounds for suspicion when race and language intersect in ways that mark certain communities as perpetual outsiders.

Addressing these contradictions demands more than policy statements. It requires dismantling the structural conditions that make raciolinguistic surveillance possible, ending local entanglement in immigration detention, and protecting schools and public spaces as true safe zones. Most importantly, it calls for building trust through sustained, community-led action that centers the voices and realities of those most impacted. By acting collectively, we can transform sanctuary from a fragile promise to a daily practice rooted in racial and linguistic justice.

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