

TOP NEWS

Hawaii immigrant sanctuary bill dies in state Legislature

Associated Press

Posted March 12, 2019

March 12, 2019

Updated March 13, 2019 8:10am



COURTESY OFFICE OF GREGG TAKAYAMA

State Rep. Gregg Takayama, the chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, said Tuesday he won't be hearing the committee.

A bill that would have made Hawaii the third so-called [sanctuary state for immigrants](#) who are in the U.S. illegally has died at the state Legislature.

The state Senate passed the bill and sent it to the House. But Rep. Gregg Takayama, the chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, said Tuesday he won't be hearing it in his committee. That effectively kills the bill.

Takayama said that because most law enforcement occurs at the county level, he believes it would be more appropriate for the counties and not the state to consider creating sanctuaries. He noted local jurisdictions on the mainland have done so.

"I didn't think there is a compelling need for a state law in this area," Takayama said.

Oregon was the first to become a sanctuary state in the 1980s. California followed in 2017.

Los Angeles and Philadelphia are among the dozens of U.S. cities, metro areas and counties that have implemented sanctuary laws. The measures aim to focus law enforcement officers on local crime rather than detaining people suspected of being in the country illegally.

The bill passed by the Senate said Hawaii law enforcement would have prevented law enforcement from stopping, questioning or interrogating an individual based solely on that person's actual or suspected immigration or citizenship status.

Hawaii law enforcement officers would be prevented from inquiring about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses and those who approach the police for help. Exceptions would be made to investigate potential criminal activity by the person.

Under the bill, Hawaii law enforcement would have been allowed to help federal immigration officials if presented with a warrant. They also would have assisted if the individual immigration officials were seeking information on had a felony conviction or had been convicted of a misdemeanor within the past five years. They would have helped if there was probable cause to believe the person was engaged in terrorist activity.

"It is essential to the public safety of all residents that there is a relationship of trust and cooperation among members of the immigrant community and state and local law enforcement agencies," the bill said. This relationship is undermined when state and local law enforcement voluntarily act at the request of federal immigration officials, it said.