

Esquivel, P. (2011). *Seven Democrats ask Brown to Suspend California's Participation in Secure Communities*. <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-secure-communities-20110611,0,3019470,print.story>, Retrieved June 11, 2011. Los Angeles Times, June 11, 2011.

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[Seven Democrats ask Brown to suspend California's participation in Secure Communities](#), The legislators join the Los Angeles City Council in opposing the program that identifies illegal immigrants with criminal records.

by Paloma Esquivel, Los Angeles Times, June 11, 2011



[Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard \(D-East Los Angeles\) speaks on the Secure Communities program at a news conference at L.A. City Hall. Listening to her are Reps. Xavier Becerra \(D-Los Angeles\) and Judy Chu \(D-Monterey Park\), second from right.](#) (Damian Dovarganes, Associated Press / June 10, 2011)

Members of California's congressional delegation called on Gov. Jerry Brown Friday to join three other states in suspending participation in a controversial federal immigration enforcement program.

The seven Democratic representatives acted after the [Los Angeles City Council](#) voted overwhelmingly this week to support legislation allowing local communities to opt out of the Secure Communities program and Sheriff Lee Baca, a strong proponent, qualified his support in a letter to immigrant activists.

In recent weeks, governors in Illinois, New York and Massachusetts have sought to suspend or have declined to enter into Secure Communities participation agreements.

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When it was launched in 2008, Secure Communities was touted as a way to target serious convicts for deportation. Under the program, the fingerprints of all arrestees booked into local jails are forwarded to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for screening.

But the program has come under fire from critics because a large percentage of those caught up in it are people who have been arrested but not subsequently convicted of a crime or are low-level offenders. Activists said the program discourages illegal immigrants from reporting crimes or cooperating with police investigations.

"This is not about trying to stop ICE from enforcing the law," said Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles). "It's about having them focus their attention on what they said Secure Communities was all about.

"The time has come," he said, "to suspend our state's participation."

Reps. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-East Los Angeles), Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park), [Maxine Waters](#) (D-Los Angeles), Linda Sanchez (D-Lakewood), Grace Napolitano (D-Norwalk) and [Karen Bass](#) (D-Los Angeles) also signed the letter and said they hoped to meet with Brown to discuss the future of the program, which he backed before winning the governor's office.

Supporters of the program point out that it has also been responsible for deporting a large number of criminals.

"I would remind Gov. Brown that he supported Secure Communities as attorney general," said Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson. "It is a very effective tool for public safety," he said, adding that it allows him to identify and remove criminal illegal immigrants from the community.

Brown's representative, reached early Friday afternoon, said she had not yet received the letter. As attorney general, Brown had said Secure Communities served "both public safety and the interest of justice."

There is still much confusion over whether states can legally opt out of the program.

Immigration officials now say [Secure Communities](#) is not dependent on participation agreements because it relies on information sharing between federal agencies. They point out that all states and counties will be mandated to participate in the program by 2013.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security's office of inspector general said it would launch its investigation of the [Secure Communities](#) program in August, two months earlier than

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expected, according to a letter from the department's acting Inspector General Charles Edwards to Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose), who urged the review.

The congresswoman had asked the inspector general to investigate whether [ICE officials](#) lied to local officials about the voluntary nature of the program and whether communities had the ability to drop out of it. The investigation will also evaluate whether [Secure Communities](#) succeeds in achieving its goal of targeting dangerous illegal immigrants.

Baca, who has been a vocal proponent of the program since its inception and who recently wrote an op-ed article in The Times in support of the program, told immigrant rights groups that he agreed with their concerns about immigrants who are caught in the program after committing "minor, first-time offenses" and said he was "against any form of deportation for illegal immigrants who have not committed a crime."

Although he supports Secure Communities, he wrote, there is need for improvement in the program.

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Times staff writer Brian Bennett contributed to this story.

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[SoCal Democrats Urge Brown To Reject Immigration Fingerprinting Plan](#), Source: CBS Los Angeles, June 10, 2011

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[L.A. is urged to support limiting local participation in deportation program](#), [Two council members'](#) proposed resolution takes aim at the [federal Secure Communities plan](#), under which arrestees' fingerprints are shared with immigration officials.

by Paloma Esquivel and Lee Romney, Los Angeles Times, 2:10 AM PDT, May 26, 2011



[Councilman and former Police Chief Bernard C. Parks listens during a council debate during his first term.](#) (Perry C. Riddle / LAT)

Adding their voices to a growing number of opponents, [Los Angeles City Councilman Bernard C. Parks](#) and [Councilwoman Jan Perry](#) have called on the city to support limiting the scope of local participation in a controversial federal deportation program.

The [City Council](#) resolution proposed Tuesday on the Secure Communities program comes as San Francisco County prepares to implement a new policy seeking to do the same. On Wednesday, law enforcement officials, including [Yolo County Sheriff Ed Prieto](#), held a national news conference to outline their concerns about the federal program.

Secure Communities, under which arrestees' fingerprints are shared with [Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#), was touted as a way to help identify and deport illegal immigrants convicted of serious crimes. It has come under fire for leading to the deportation of those who were either arrested but not subsequently convicted of a crime or convicted of misdemeanors or

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infractions, such as a traffic violation.

Of 38,828 people in California deported through Secure Communities between May 2009 and March of this year, about 12,000 were charged with or convicted of major violent offenses, while nearly 11,000 were classified as [non-criminal](#) deportees, according to ICE statistics.

The proposed council resolution supports a bill like that sponsored by [Assemblyman Tom Ammiano \(D-San Francisco\)](#), which requires that only fingerprints of convicted felons be run through the immigration database. The bill also contains protections for domestic-violence victims and juveniles and would make the enforcement program optional for counties.

Parks said the [program](#) directly contradicted the [intent](#) of [Special Order 40](#), a more than 30-year-old Los Angeles Police Department policy [that prohibits police from initiating contact with anyone for the sole purpose of determining whether they are in the country illegally.](#)

"I wanted to express what I believed was the position of this city over the last decades," said the former police chief. "From what I can read of the program, a high percentage of those who are being deported have not necessarily committed the most serious crimes."

[Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca](#) has been a vocal proponent of Secure Communities. "The program enables law enforcement agencies to identify criminals who are here illegally and allows the federal government to target those who have committed serious crimes for deportation so they no longer pose a threat to our communities," Baca wrote in The Times this month.

On Wednesday Sheriff Ed Prieto of Yolo County; [Sheriff Patrick Perez of Kane County, Ill.](#); Arturo Venegas Jr., the retired police chief of Sacramento; and immigration rights activists held a news conference to express their opposition to the program. Illinois recently terminated its participation agreement, though it remains unclear whether federal officials will honor the action.

Prieto, who said he was unaware for a long time that the program was even in place, said he is now looking for ways to get out of it.

Meanwhile, [San Francisco County Sheriff Michael Hennessey](#) has crafted a new policy that will deny immigration holds for arrestees who have committed infractions or low-level misdemeanors. It is expected to go into effect June 1 and comes after San Francisco and Santa Clara counties unsuccessfully sought to opt out of the federal program.

ICE detainer requests — which ask that suspects be held for 48 hours so immigration authorities can fetch them — will still be honored for more serious misdemeanor suspects and for those who have committed a prior felony, two prior misdemeanors or a domestic violence offense, or violated a domestic violence protective order. Those arrested on minor offenses without such priors will be cited and released. Arrestees whose charges are later dropped will also be released,

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rather than turned over to ICE, the policy states.

ICE spokeswoman Virginia Kice called the decision unfortunate and said ICE detainers are an effective tool to ensure that those arrested "on criminal charges, who are also in violation of U.S. immigration law, are not released back into the community to potentially commit more crimes."

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