Summary of Findings
Recent research shows that the more local law enforcement cooperates with Federal Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (ICE), the more fear and distrust there is among the immigrant community, resulting in degraded police-community relationships and higher levels of crime, and greater obstacles to law enforcement carrying out its primary mission, protecting public safety. In other words, the less local enforcement cooperates with ICE, the safer the community. Furthermore, research shows that economies are stronger in communities that do not cooperate with ICE.

Review of Data/Research
Gill and Nguyen (2015), in a study of local law enforcement involvement in the Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (ICE) 287g program in two communities, found that “despite different jurisdictional implementation styles and contexts”, there was a consistent drop in civic engagement, and perceived vulnerability to crime. (Note: Section 287g enables the federal government to partner with state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce civil and criminal immigration violations) 287g even impacted immigrant owned business, who “experienced a disruption in economic activity and immigrants report greater exploitation by employers and landlords”. The study also found that this economic disruption spilled over to the entire community, even in the community where participation in 287g and Secure Communities was less rigorously applied.

Wong (2017), more recently, in a systematic analysis comparing sanctuary and non-sanctuary counties across a range of social and economic indicators, found that crime is statistically significantly lower in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties.

This study also confirmed the finding that such policies impact local economic activity. In sanctuary cities, the economy was stronger along a wide variety of measures, including:

- There are, on average, 35.5 fewer crimes committed per 10,000 people in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties.
- Median household annual income is, on average, $4,353 higher in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties.
- The poverty rate is 2.3 percent lower, on average, in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties.
- Unemployment is, on average, 1.1 percent lower in sanctuary counties compared to non-sanctuary counties.
- While the results hold true across sanctuary jurisdictions, the sanctuary counties with the smallest populations see the most pronounced effects.

“Altogether, the data suggest that when local law enforcement focuses on keeping communities safe, rather than becoming entangled in federal immigration enforcement efforts, communities are safer and community members stay more engaged in the local economy. This in turn brings benefits to individual households, communities, counties, and the economy as a whole.”
In addition to the author’s own research Wong cites The International Association of Chiefs of Police, and Major Cities Chiefs Association which conclude that involvement of local law enforcement with immigration enforcement leads to decreased reporting of crimes and cooperation between immigrant communities and police. Further Wong concludes that “By keeping out of federal immigration enforcement, sanctuary counties are keeping families together—and when households remain intact and individuals can continue contributing, this strengthens local economies.”

A study published by the institute on Taxation and Economic Policy in February, 2016, (http://www.itep.org/pdf/immigration2016.pdf) quantified the potential level of economic disruption such non-sanctuary policies could produce, “The truth is that undocumented immigrants living in the United States pay billions of dollars each year in state and local taxes.”; i.e., at total of $11.64 billion a year. The California total is $3.17 Billion. The study also found that undocumented immigrants pay on average 8 percent of their incomes in state and local taxes, as compared to the 5.4% of income paid by to top 1 percent of taxpayers. Because immigrant owned businesses suffer when there poor police-community relations, it is not hard to assume that increased cooperation of local law enforcement with ICE could negatively impact local sales tax collection.

In a rigorous analysis of “Sanctuary Cities” (The Politics of Refuge: Sanctuary Cities, Crime, and Undocumented Immigration, August 16, 2016) the authors looked at whether such cities, defined as: “a city or police department that has passed a resolution or ordinance expressly forbidding city or law enforcement officials from inquiring into immigration status and/or cooperation with ICE”, compared to other statistically similar cities, had more crime, “be it violent, property, or rape, as claimed by some political candidates and opponents of sanctuary cities.” The study noted that “in recent years, a few high profile incidents where undocumented immigrants have committed...crimes have led some political candidates ... to make sweeping negative claims about the deleterious effects of sanctuary cities. The argument is that sanctuary cities bring crime: undocumented immigrants ... go to these cities to commit their crimes because they know there their chances of deportation are much lower.”

The study analyzed crime data in two ways – first at the individual-city level by observing whether crime rates change in the year following the implementation of a sanctuary policy within the city. The second method was to conduct a match between sanctuary cities and similarly situated cities that do not have sanctuary policies, then examine whether crime is different across the two groups. The results from both methods indicated that there is “no discernible difference on each type of crime we measured between sanctuary and non-sanctuary cities. Thus, when it comes to crime, we conclude that sanctuary cities have essentially no impact one way or the other.” (http://www.collingwoodresearch.com/uploads/8/3/6/0/8360930/shelter_nopols_blind.pdf)

Finally, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration, an organization consisting of 200 current and former police chiefs, sheriffs, federal and state prosecutors, and attorneys general from all 50 states, recently released a report titled, “FIGHTING CRIME AND STRENGTHENING CRIMINAL JUSTICE: An Agenda for the New Administration”. One of their key conclusions clearly articulates why increasing numbers of local law enforcement agencies are limiting cooperation with ICE: “A mistrustful community puts police officers at risk. Without cooperation between law enforcement and the community, enhancing public safety is next to impossible.”

Other Sources
The premise that sanctuary cities are endangering our nation is fundamentally unsound. “Immigrants who are in the country illegally are less likely to commit crimes or be incarcerated than the general population”. This article cites the evidence presented in Tom K Wong’s afore referenced research.

Citing the above referenced report by Tom Wong as well as the National Immigration Law Center, and a 2012 congressional report, this article concludes that “sanctuary cities show lower crime and higher economic well being”. Further, that “mayors on both sides of the political aisle who have argued that conflating policing with immigration enforcement leads to a breakdown in community trust.”

New York Times Editorial
Editorial cited 2014 report that: “Unauthorized workers are paying an estimated $13 billion a year in social security taxes and only getting around $1 billion back, according to a senior government statistician. Stephen Goss, the chief actuary of the Social Security Administration (SSA)... estimated 7 million people are currently working in the US illegally. Of those, he estimates that about 3.1 million are using fake or expired social security numbers, yet also paying automatic payroll taxes. Goss believes that these workers pay an annual net contribution of $12 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund. The SSA estimates that unauthorized workers have paid a whopping $100 billion into the fund over the past decade. Yet as these people are in the US illegally, it is unlikely that they will be able to benefit from their contributions later in life.”

https://medium.com/homeland-security/papers-please-1ce6811d39c7#.29w49dqwx

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