Rochester beats Trump suit over sanctuary

Judge rules policies do not block immigration laws

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A federal judge has dismissed the Trump administration's challenge to Rochester's long-standing sanctuary city policy, a major legal victory for city officials after a year-long fight over cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

"This decision from the U.S. District Court affirms today that we will fight and stand for Rochester," Mayor Malik Evans said Sept. 2. "We will always stand up for Rochester, and we will always stand rock solid."

In dismissing the case, U.S. District Judge Frank Geraci found that Rochester's sanctuary city policies do not prevent the federal government from enforcing immigration laws. Rochester adopted the policies in 1986 and reaffirmed them in 2017.



People line Church Street as they join the City Hall Rally to Fight for our Sanctuary City event in downtown Rochester on April 29, 2025. SHAWN DOWD/ ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

The policies generally limit city cooperation with federal immigration enforcement efforts.

The Trump administration sued the City of Rochester over its sanctuary city policies in April

2025. The lawsuit from the Department of Justice, filed April 24, 2025, highlighted an incident in late March 2025 in which Rochester police were called as backup to immigration officials who were making a traffic stop. But then ICE had city police pull people from a van and make the arrests.

The March arrests also drew the attention of Trump's border czar, Thomas Homan, who defended the Rochester officers and threatened to flood sanctuary cities with more immigration officers if local officials refuse to help with enforcement efforts.

Evans said the dismissal of the lawsuit is a win for the residents of Rochester.

"As I said almost a year ago, who would have ever thought that a medium sized city on the banks of Lake Ontario, we still call it Lake Ontario, would be defending ourselves against the richest, most powerful government in the world that is supposed to be supporting us, not suing us. This is a victory," Evans

said.

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