

## Another view ; Sanctuary city meeting lacking perspectives

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I attended the town hall meeting on sanctuary cities at the UTSA downtown campus on Jan. 26. I must say I came away disappointed.

First, there was a glaring omission. No sanctuary city advocate was on the panel. I came to a town hall meeting on sanctuary cities and expected to hear at least one pro-sanctuary city voice. Nor was there anyone on the panel representing immigrants, legal or illegal.

The anti-sanctuary side was well represented by Robert Stovall, GOP county chairman, and Jeff Judson from the uber-right Heartland Institute. It was obvious they were there to push the latest illiberal soup du jour, Senate Bill 4, which would force police to enforce federal immigration laws.

The sanest voice on the panel was Police Chief William McManus, who kept repeating that immigration issues are the domain of the federal government, not local police departments. He pointed out that SB 4 would lead to profiling, which would lead to distrust and fear in many communities, and ultimately to more crime, not less.

The illiberals spoke of a post-racial world that they wanted to protect. When exactly did we become a post-racial world? This type of logic removes race as a factor and implies that now that all things are equal, it's obvious that those of European descent are superior. But, hey, it's not racist. It's post-racial.

State Rep. Diego Bernal, D-San Antonio, basically approached the issue from a legal perspective and argued persuasively that many folks tend to lump illegal immigrants with crime and crime with illegal immigrants. The two are not synonymous, he said. I agree.

McManus pointed out that anyone who commits a crime, whether a citizen or illegal immigrant, or illegal "alien" as Stovall called them, would be dealt with in exactly the same way. In fact, the chief kept pointing out that forcing local police to do Immigration and Custom Enforcement's job would increase crime rather than diminish it by creating fear and distrust of police and forcing those who help the police underground. It was hard to miss the irony of Stovall and Judson knowing more about policing than the police chief sitting right next to them. But that's what seems to happen when ideology and an agenda trump dialogue.

I was also disappointed that the term "illegal immigrant" wasn't challenged. There is a major problem with lumping everyone in this basket. Imagine how horrific the circumstances must be for these vulnerable human beings to leave their homes for the hazardous journey. Many of the women coming to our southern border have been raped and abused, many repeatedly, and their children molested on their perilous journey. Are these really illegal immigrants, or are they refugees?

Another group of people coming to our southern border are workers in the agricultural, construction and service industries. If it's illegal for workers to go back and forth across the border, hasn't this created an underground, exploitable workforce? Are these really illegal immigrants?

For all the talk of Middle Eastern terrorist threats, the focus ends up on building a wall on our southern border as if this will protect us from the "bad" guys. Many of us in the West have a special bond with Mexico and Mexican culture. Drugs and potential terrorists won't be stopped by a wall. Refugees and workers will.

If being a sanctuary city means helping protect desperate mothers and children, I'm for it. Let the police handle criminals, not refugees and migrant workers.

SB 4 appears to be driven by ideology that does next to nothing to stop potential terrorists or drug lords. If we really want to resolve the problems at our border, we need to stop putting refugees in prison and create a system that allows workers into our country. I didn't hear any of these issues addressed at the town hall meeting. That's why I was disappointed.

Eric Lane lives and works in San Antonio.

- Caption: 1) San Antonio Police Chief William McManus speaks during a town hall meeting on sanctuary cities at UTSA. No one on the panel was pro-sanctuary cities. PHOTO: Ray Whitehouse/For the San Antonio Express-News 2) Eric Lane: Drugs and terrorists won't be stopped by a wall. Refugees and workers will.

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## Another view ; Fight Trump's version of normal

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The esteem of the American presidency recently hit another low point when President Donald Trump tweeted his displeasure with Nordstrom because of its decision to stop carrying merchandise from the company bearing Ivanka Trump's name.

A few days later, presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway compounded the problem by urging Fox News viewers to buy Ivanka Trump's products. Although Trump's outburst seems to have had only a brief dampening effect on the value of Nordstrom stock, the collateral harm from these events is more worrying, more widespread and longer term than market price concerns.

The most serious risk from this affair, and others we are likely to see in the future, is to people's perceptions and expectations.

In terms of formal laws, we exempt the president from many conflict-of-interest regulations, a practice that reflects the power and complexity of the office. For this reason, we have relied historically on informal mechanisms - or norms - to ensure that we can trust our president to act for the good of the nation rather than in self-interest.

Trump has refused to take the voluntary steps his predecessors did by fully divesting from his business interests, nor has he made his tax records public so that people can see exactly where sources of potential conflicts lie. Previous presidents did not publicly bully an American company over a business decision that cut off money to a family member, but Trump flouts all such conventions.

Norms retain their power when they are, well, "normal," routinely considered as a guide to expected behavior. When we call out people for deviating from norms, we prove the norm and its expectations still exist.

Although there has been some bipartisan criticism of Conway's blatant sales pitch, Republicans have largely abstained from using their influence to criticize the president and thereby uphold norms of anti-corruption. For instance, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas refused to comment on Trump's "intentions" or "tell the president what to do." One has to wonder how Dallas-based Neiman Marcus, which also had to make decisions about Ivanka Trump's brand, felt knowing that its senator will not have its back if it crosses Trump. The silence and hemming risk making it seem that we expect this of presidents.

It thus falls on the public, you and me, to uphold the norm. We must continue to push for Trump to dial back using his office for his own gain, but if that does not come to pass, we cannot allow him to set the norms for those to come. Otherwise, we risk falling into the trap of believing that this is just what powerful people do.

That spells the end for any remaining legitimacy afforded the office of the president. We must remember that these recent events are not normal and never should be.

Mary R. Rose is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin.

- Caption: The esteem of the American presidency recently hit another low point when President Donald Trump tweeted his displeasure with Nordstrom because of its decision to stop carrying merchandise from the company bearing Ivanka Trump's name. A few days later, presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway compounded the problem by urging Fox News viewers to buy Ivanka Trump's products. Although Trump's outburst seems to have had only a brief dampening effect on the value of Nordstrom stock, the collateral harm from these events is more worrying, more widespread and longer term than market price concerns.

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