We, the undersigned, stand together in strong support of Santa Clara County’s current Civil Detainer Policy 3.54 passed by the Board of Supervisors on October 18, 2011. The policy separates local law enforcement from federal immigration, builds needed trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, and creates a safer Santa Clara County for all. As such, we also collectively reject any attempts to undermine the policy.
Since October 2011, when the policy was passed, Santa Clara County has become a beacon for counties nationwide, and the policy, a model to follow as an intelligent and value-driven response to immigration detainer requests. As a region where one-third of our residents are immigrants, nearly half of our workforce is foreign-born and close to two-thirds of those under the age of 18 are children of immigrants -- it was appropriate that our county lead the way. Refusing to buy any more lies from ICE which strung along the entire country with the failed promises of the Secure Communities Program, Santa Clara County wisely took a stand to not participate in the enforcement of our broken immigration laws that have, to date, resulted in the deportation of over 80,000 from California alone.

The policy, guided through a lengthy process that included input from elected decision-makers, law enforcement officials, legal experts, and community advocates, respects the criminal court system in imposing and overseeing the appropriate punishment on criminal behavior. Use of detainer requests to hold individuals even after courts have determined the appropriate custodial status and weighed the public safety concerns only erodes trust and causes confusion between immigrant communities and local law enforcement. ICE, which has proven to be as unaccountable as it has been deceptive, should not control our county’s criminal justice system. When this happens, public safety and belief in the integrity of our local justice system becomes compromised. The current policy demonstrates our County's decision to elevate local concerns and a rejection of ICE's false choice of public safety OR immigrants' rights.

In addition, if the County decides to reconsider or worse, revoke, this policy only one year after it was passed, this will be viewed as a failure of leadership. We count on our leaders to be consistent, strong, and enduring in their commitment to the people of this county. To retreat from a policy voted in just a year prior would send a confusing message to the public that would cause a crisis of confidence. How much can we depend on our elected officials if they believe in a policy enough to vote for it one year, then flip flop just a year later?

The County spent more than a year deliberating on this policy which was passed by the Board of Supervisors and supported by a cross-ethnic collaboration of faith based organizations, civil rights groups, community groups, immigrants rights service providers, and immigrant rights advocates. Santa Clara County had it right the first time. Protecting immigrant rights results in greater public safety. We urge you to protect the Civil Detainer Policy 3.54 as it stands, and let our community continue to build a County that respects the rights and well-being of all its residents through sound and principled policies.

Respectfully,

Santa Clara County Forum for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (FIRE) Coalition
ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) Berkeley North East Bay Chapter
ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) North Peninsula Chapter
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Law Caucus
Black Alliance for Just Immigration
California Immigrant Policy Center
Causa Justa:: Just Cause
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Popular Democracy
Central Valley Dream Team
Chinese for Affirmative Action
Coalition for Justice and Accountability
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
Congregations Building Community
Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)
Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Francisco Bay Area Office (CAIR-SFBA)
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Green Party of Santa Clara County
Domestic Violence Advocacy Consortium of Santa Clara County
Filipino Advocates for Justice
Human Agenda
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Jobs with Justice (National)
Judson Memorial Church
Justice for Palestinians
La Fuente
MAIZ-Cihuatl Tlatocan
Mid-Peninsula Chapter of the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union)
Mujeres Unidas y Activas
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
National Lawyers Guild San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice
New Sanctuary Movement New York City
New Sanctuary Coalition of New York City
Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Pax Christi, East San Jose
People Acting in Community Together — San Jose
PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing) California
PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing) National Network
Pilipino Association of Workers and Immigrants, Silicon Valley
Rights Working Group
Sacred Heart Community Service, San Jose
San Jose Peace and Justice Center
Santa Cruz Immigration Action Group
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network
Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform
Silicon Valley De-Bug
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, CA
Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Youth United for Community Action

*Individuals:*
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Reverend Lindi Ramsden, Senior Minister & Executive Director, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, CA
Manuel De Paz, Community Development and Education Program Coordinator, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
Paul Johnston, Sociologist affiliated with the Department of Sociology, UC Santa Cruz
Father Richard L. Smith, Ph.D
Samina Sundas, founding Executive director of the American Muslim Voice