



22 June 2019

An Open Letter to the Governor About HB 370

Dear Governor Cooper,

The Durham People's Alliance (PA) chapter and Political Action Committee (PAC) stand united in our strong opposition to House Bill 370, titled "Require Sheriff Cooperation with ICE". We urge you to veto HB 370.

The city of Durham stands united in opposition to HB 370. As an organization, PA recently co-signed [a letter](#), joining more than 40 North Carolina organizations, in opposing this bill. Voters, immigrants, and allies are waiting to hear that you stand with us.

As you know, the Durham People's Alliance (PA) is a grassroots organization that has been advancing a progressive vision for Durham and our state for more than 40 years. We believe a community can be more than a place where people live - it can be a place where all people live well. **We work to elect progressive people to office and hold them accountable 365 days a year.** Endorsements of our PAC have led to a City Council committed to inclusion and equity, and to a new District Attorney and Sheriff committed to reducing inequities in our justice system. Clarence Birkhead, our new Sheriff, ousted the incumbent by utilizing a platform that included ending cooperation with ICE. A politician who does not take a firm stance against HB 370 would not be aligned with our values and vision and would find it difficult to win our endorsement.

Forcing Sheriffs to honor ICE detainees is unconstitutional. Federal courts and judges across the country have found ICE detainees to be in violation of the 4th Amendment. Moreover, it exposes sheriffs and counties to enormous liabilities. For these reasons and more, multiple sheriffs, including Durham County Sheriff Birkhead, have spoken out against HB 370.

We are very aware of the racial dynamics of this issue between black and white sheriffs as well: As you may be aware, five of North Carolina's biggest counties elected new sheriffs in 2019. They all quickly cut cooperation with ICE. These sheriffs, now ostensibly targeted, are all black. Despite the fact that so many voters in North Carolina showed their support for ending cooperation with ICE, racism has taken center stage. We urge you to take a stand against racism and the equity issues embedded in HB 370.

Additionally, at a time when many law enforcement agencies are building and strengthening ties with disenfranchised communities, HB 370 will destroy the seeds of trust that have sprouted since the 2018 elections. We believe in creating safe, inclusive communities where no one is left behind, but North Carolina has experienced a 460% surge in ICE arrests, leading to thousands of detentions, deportations, and family separations since Trump's election. It is time to say, "enough".

The Durham People's Alliance, as believers in "... a just, equitable and inclusive community," strongly opposes HB 370. We urge you to stand with us and veto HB 370. We support all politicians who take a stand against this racist, cruel bill, and we look forward to the opportunity to vote, support, and endorse the politicians that take a stand today.

Signed,

The Durham People's Alliance Board
The Durham People's Alliance Political Action Committee