



ISABEL AGUAYO
Mayor

ANNETTE C. DELGADILLO
Vice Mayor

PEGGY LEMONS
Councilmember

BRENDA OLMOS
Councilmember

VILMA CUELLAR STALLINGS
Councilmember

October 19, 2023

The Honorable Nanette Diaz Barragán
Congresswoman, 44th District
United States House of Representatives
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NOTICE OF OPPOSITION – H.R. 1525, THE FIFTH AMENDMENT INTEGRITY RESTORATION (FAIR) ACT OF 2023

Dear Congresswoman Barragán:

The City of Paramount would like to express our opposition to H.R. 1525, the Fifth Amendment Integrity Restoration (FAIR) Act of 2023, passed by the House Judiciary Committee in June. As currently drafted, this legislation will severely impact our community by eliminating the U.S. Department of Justice's Equitable Sharing Program, significantly reducing cooperation between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies when this collaboration is more critical than ever.

The Equitable Sharing Program allows the U.S. Department of Justice to share proceeds derived from forfeited property with the state and local law enforcement agencies directly involved in the investigations or operations resulting in the property seizure. The program also provides state and local law enforcement agencies with the means to participate in essential joint task forces, purchase equipment (including officer safety equipment), conduct training, upgrade technology, and support community-based programs and public engagement efforts. The Equitable Sharing Program allows the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to participate in regional narcotic enforcement operations. Eliminating the "equitable sharing" program would undermine the cornerstone of state and local participation in joint operations with federal law enforcement, especially on task forces such as High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) that typically focus investigative resources on organized criminal activity and the most serious violent offenders.


The City of Paramount has previously utilized the forfeiture/equitable funds to purchase equipment that has led to the apprehension of high-warrant criminals while enhancing officer safety. An Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR), for example, can effectively

identify a stolen vehicle leading to the location of wanted fugitives suspects in active investigations. These are vital contributions to the overall safety and well-being of the Paramount community, and they would no longer be possible under H.R. 1525.

While critics of the civil asset forfeiture process are concerned law enforcement agencies may use the technique to augment their budgets, the City has robust policies and procedures in place to mitigate this risk and prevent misconduct. Rather than enacting H.R. 1525, Congress should focus on supporting the capacity of law enforcement agencies to conduct audits, collect and report data, and implement other transparency measures that can guard against the abuse of civil asset forfeiture while ensuring it remains a viable tool to make it harder for criminals to break the law.

For these reasons, the City opposes the FAIR Act which will have detrimental impacts on the public safety of our community. Please feel free to contact City Manager John Moreno at (562) 220-2225, if you have any questions. On behalf of the City of Paramount, we thank you for your time and consideration.

CITY OF PARAMOUNT



Isabel Aguayo
Mayor

cc. Honorable State Senator Lena Gonzalez, 33rd District
Honorable Assembly Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon, 62nd District
Kristine Guerrero, Regional Public Affairs Manager, League of California Cities
Jorge Morales, Legislative and Governmental Affairs Consultant, California Contract Cities Association