

# Holyoke city council votes against sanctuary city resolution

Kristina D'Amours 10/9/25 [Story source: WWLP Ch. 22](#)

*Editor's Note: A video has been removed from this article because 22News incorrectly stated Mayor Joshua Garcia's stance on the resolution. We regret the error.*

HOLYOKE, Mass. (WWLP) – The Holyoke City Council voted 7 to 6 to “leave to withdraw” a resolution reaffirming that Holyoke is not a sanctuary city.

The resolution, proposed by City Councilors Kevin Jourdain and Linda Vacon, aims to realign Holyoke with federal law and remove the city from a list of sanctuary cities, which could potentially jeopardize federal funding.

“If we are trying to communicate with the federal government and let them know where we stand on this and what we’re doing, if that’s the case, then I can’t support that,” said Israel Rivera, a member of the Holyoke City Council.

The Development and Governmental Relations Subcommittee of Holyoke voted down the resolution on Monday night.

An ordinance from 2017 already prevents Holyoke from becoming a sanctuary city, but the federal government recently classified it as such, raising concerns about funding losses.

“What they are really trying to do is roll out the red carpet for immigration enforcement,” said Claire McGale, a member of Real Majority Holyoke, during a protest outside City Hall.

“Holyoke is built on diversity and inclusion, and no family should live in fear of being separated,” said Jenny Rivera, a Holyoke City Council member.

Kevin Jourdain, a member of the Holyoke City Council, expressed concerns about potential funding losses if Holyoke is classified as a sanctuary city.

“We are committed to upholding the laws, and that includes not getting involved in what’s not really our job to be doing locally,” said Mayor Joshua Garcia.

Ahead of the meeting, Holyoke residents gathered outside City Hall to protest the resolution, expressing concerns that it could invite federal agencies with a history of racial profiling into the community. Residents then attended the City Council chambers to voice their opposition, some individuals who argued that reaffirming Holyoke’s non-sanctuary status could alienate residents and invite ICE agents into the city.

Councilor Tessa R. Murphy-Romboletti voiced concerns that the reaffirmation could bring fear and confusion among residents, stating, “I think that we are inviting federal agencies with a history of racial profiling to insert themselves into our community.”

The resolution was voted down by the Development and Governmental Relations Subcommittee on Monday night.