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Assembly Committee Holds Hearing On Immigration Bill

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MADISON, Wis. -- The Assembly Judiciary and Ethics Committee held a hearing Thursday on a bill that would allow city officials to question a person about their immigration status.

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The term "sanctuary city" has been used to describe cities like Los Angeles and Chicago, cities that many say do not enforce federal immigration laws.

Sen. Glenn Grothman, R-West Bend, who introduced the bill, said it will help Wisconsin cities enforce immigration laws.

"Until we stop these local units of government in the state of Wisconsin from becoming sanctuary cities, we are sending the message in Wisconsin that our immigration laws should not be enforced," Grothman said.

Those who oppose Assembly Bill 569 said immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility, not local.

"Rather than offering solutions to real problems, this bill is another example of demonizing immigrants at the expense of all of us. We are here to say, 'No more hate,'" said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, of Voces de La Frontera.

Proponents said cities like Milwaukee and, to a lesser degree, Madison, are becoming safe havens for undocumented immigrants. The bill would allow city officials to notify Immigration and Customs Enforcement about an undocumented person.

"The United States has more people immigrating to our country than any other country in the world. To say that we, by having immigration laws in this country, we're practicing hatred is just absurd," Grothman said.

There's still no word on when the committee will vote on the bill. Supporters said the bill's biggest hurdle will come if it reaches the Senate floor.

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