



BROOME COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Frederick J. Akshar II

Undersheriff Sammy L. Davis

155 Lt. Van Winkle Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905

United States House Committee on the Judiciary

"The Continuing Tragedy of Sanctuary Laws"

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

10:00 AM

Opening Statement from Broome County Sheriff Fred Akshar

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Jayapal and the Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Fred Akshar and I am proudly serving the people of Broome County, NY as the 58th Broome County Sheriff. I began my law enforcement career as a dispatcher in 2000 and spent 15 years serving the people of the Southern Tier of New York in law enforcement as a Road Patrol Deputy, as an undercover narcotics investigator for the Special Investigations Unit Task Force to Captain of the Law Enforcement Division and finally Undersheriff of Broome County.

In 2015, I was elected to the New York State Senate, where I served the people of my community in Albany. In 2023, I returned to my law enforcement roots as Broome County Sheriff, leading a law enforcement agency of over 300 sworn officers and civilians and overseeing a 600-bed correctional facility.

The men and women of the Broome County Sheriff's Office, some of whom I am with today and with whom I am honored to serve beside, have devoted themselves to protecting and serving the people of our community. Every day, they put on the uniform, kiss their families goodbye and put themselves in harm's way to protect others, to prevent tragedies from occurring and to protect families, loved ones, and community members like the witnesses that join us today.

Over the past several years, we've seen bureaucrats in Albany consistently working to make it harder and harder for these men and women in uniform do their job and keep people safe.

No matter the hypothetical intentions behind laws like raise the age, bail reform, discovery reform, less is more or the HALT act, the real-world consequences of these laws have turned the criminal justice system into a revolving door of repeated offenders being released without any consequences, only to create new victims every day.

New York's so-called Local Cops Local Crimes Act is just another in a long line of politically-motivated stunts designed to appease advocates and do what is politically expedient for some at the expense of public safety and common sense. While it says one thing, it does another, and what these new statutes actually do is let Albany cancel local public-safety contracts and then investigate the sheriffs who made them. Putting handcuffs on cops rather than the criminals they were designed for.

Make no mistake, the Broome County Sheriff's Office has and always will comply with the law as written, but I have joined 14 other independently elected sheriffs from across our state in a lawsuit to stop two new statutes — Executive Law §§ 170-K and 63-E.

The policy of the Broome County Sheriff's Office from the start has been to prioritize public safety, with a clear understanding of what our role is. We understand that our deputies are not immigration officers and we would not be participating in day-to-day Civil Immigration enforcement.

Thanks to the work of those in the federal government there is an entire agency designed for dedicated to that very thing, but if there were ever a situation where the safety of our community was in jeopardy because of a wanted criminal – regardless of his/her immigration status - we would not hesitate to act in the interest of protecting our community. We have and always will support our colleagues in law enforcement regardless of the agency for which they work or the uniform that they wear, that's what cops do!

The Broome County community, like others across our nation, is not immune to the consequences of 10 million unvetted, undocumented individuals entering our country during the Biden Administration.

In August of 2024, in Endicott, NY 145 miles from New York City and a handful of miles from where my son goes to school, a Peruvian gang leader and serial killer Gianfranco Torres-Navarro, wanted for 23 killings in Peru was located and arrested. He had entered illegally in May, had been arrested the day he arrived and given notice to appear for immigration proceedings. Did he show up for his hearings? No, he went to New York to hide in our community, thanks to the sanctuary laws that are embraced by and promoted by democrat leaders in New York. Rather than protecting law-abiding New Yorkers, their laws provide safe harbor for people like Torres-Navarro.

From the start, the Broome County Sheriff's Office has taken a thoughtful, pragmatic approach in everything we do, I'll never apologize for that, nor will I apologize for prioritizing public safety.

Last year, as immigration enforcement was ramping up, we agreed to have several corrections officers trained as Warrant Service Officers to administer warrants only within our Correctional Facility on individuals already arrested for a crime. We entered into this program to ensure that we were always in compliance with the law as we assisted our federal partners.

The new Local Cops Local Crimes act doesn't just take a training credential from our corrections officers. It takes away our ability to house federal detainees for Immigration and Customs Enforcement—the beds are available, the per-diem paid for those beds matters to the local taxpayers, and most importantly the orderly handoff of people the federal government is already responsible for matter to the safety of the people that I represent. All of that has been taken away thanks to Governor Hochul and the democrat led NYS legislature.

While we have never actively participated in any day-to-day civil immigration enforcement in the community, we have housed federal detainees for the US Marshals Service, the FBI, Homeland Security and ICE for over 20 years.

Albany did not ask sheriffs to “focus on local crime.” It canceled by operation of law, the existing contracts those sheriffs use when a person already sitting in the county jail is also wanted by the federal government, and it built a bureau to make sure the sheriffs stay canceled. That bureau led by none other than AG Letitia James.

This law isn't freeing up resources to focus on local crimes, it's shifting the cost of legally required resources directly onto the taxpayer. The Jail Enforcement and Warrant Service models operate on people already in our jail for committing a crime against a Broome County resident. The county pays those officers' salaries either way. What the county gets back is information, an orderly handoff of wanted people, and — on the housing side — millions of dollars in federal reimbursement.

Our county stands to lose over \$2 million in revenue that went directly toward offsetting local taxes for Broome County residents.

The U.S. Constitution says no State shall pass a law impairing the obligation of contracts. My colleagues and I have written agreements with the Marshals Service, ICE and other federal agencies. The statute does not regulate those contracts. It declares them void and strips these organizations and independently elected sheriffs of contracts they already performed.

I swore an oath to protect the people of Broome County. I did not swear an oath to accept a state statute that forces the end of federal contracts and meaningful working relationships with federal law enforcement partners because Governor Hochul dislikes the federal partner.

I'll repeat something I recently said back at home because I feel so strongly about it: I don't answer to Governor Hochul nor do I answer to AG James, I answer directly to the great people of Broome County. My ability to serve doesn't come from the governor, the attorney general or from an interview in a board room, it comes directly from the people at the ballot box.

Mr. Chairman I'll end here:

I've recently been asked, why would you file a lawsuit against two of the most powerful politicians in Albany, the answer is simple: Because it's about standing up for what's right and standing up for Public Safety. It's standing up for the job the men and women in uniform, including those behind me today do every day. It's about standing up against the continued erosion of accountability and common sense in our criminal justice system. It's standing up on behalf of the victims of preventable tragedies perpetrated by criminals who have been coddled by opportunistic politicians and out-of-touch activists. It's standing up for people like my fellow witnesses and countless who've endured unimaginable pain because of decisions made out of political expediency rather than right and wrong. It's standing up for the safety of my own 6-year-old son, my family and countless other families who should never be needlessly put in harm's way because of political gamesmanship, grandstanding and theater.

We must find a way to stop talking past each other and start working together. This new Albany law is just more of the same empty and cynical tactics from bureaucrats that put partisan politics before public safety.

"Local cops, local crimes — unless the local cop wants a federal partner. Then Albany takes the keys."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Akshar II', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frederick J. Akshar II
Broome County Sheriff