

PRINCETON DIPLOMATIC INVITATIONAL 2026



*Committee of  
American Mayors*

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Chair: Nikhil Kuntipuram  
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## FROM YOUR DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to PDI 2026! I am so excited to have you join us for what promises to be an incredible conference. I'm Eric, and I'll be serving as your Director-General for the next four days. I can't wait to get to know all of you throughout the weekend and help make this experience as rewarding as possible.

A little about me: I'm a second-year student majoring in Public and International Affairs with a minor in Computer Science. I'm originally from Chişinău, Moldova but have also lived in Kyiv (Ukraine), Moscow (Russia), Ankara (Turkey), and Baku (Azerbaijan) throughout my life. On campus, I am also involved in PMUNC and PMUNT, am an international student leader at the Davis IC, and write for the Prince. If I'm not doing any of those things, I'm probably listening to, playing, or geeking out about heavy metal.

I'm thrilled to be working with an amazing team of Chairs and Crisis Directors to bring you exciting and thought-provoking crisis committees this year. I hope you come prepared to dive deep into past, present, and fictional issues, push your negotiation skills to the limit, and engage with the diverse perspectives that make conferences like PDI so special. Most importantly, I hope that you have fun and make the most of your time here.

Feel free to reach out to me anytime with any questions or thoughts you might have. I look forward to seeing you in committee!

Sincerely,

Eric Mohorea '28 ([em4523@princeton.edu](mailto:em4523@princeton.edu))



## FROM YOUR CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nikhil Kuntipuram, and it is my absolute honor to welcome you all to PDI 2026. This year, I have the privilege of serving as your chair for the Committee on American Mayors! I am thrilled to help foster meaningful dialogue and debate on some of America's most pressing challenges. I look forward to seeing each of you engage thoughtfully with these issues and hope that you leave this conference having learned something new from what promises to be a truly exciting experience.

I'd like to take a moment to tell you about myself. To begin with, I am a sophomore from Reston, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. Growing up surrounded by public servants sparked my interest in policy and international affairs, which led me to pursue a degree in the School of Public and International Affairs, along with a minor in Statistics and Machine learning. My Model UN journey began in sixth grade, when I represented Australia in ASEAN and debated tariffs—a surprisingly fascinating experience at that age. That conference ignited what has now become a nine-year journey within Model UN. At Princeton, I served last year as a director general for our high school conference, and I am now currently the Vice President of the International Relations Council. Outside of MUN, I work as a lead event assistant at Richardson Auditorium, and I am also a jazz drummer, performing in a small combo on campus.

Over the past few years, mayors have been taking the spotlight on the political stage. Whether it be Pete Buttigieg's inspiring run for office in 2020, or Zohran Mamdani taking the world by storm in 2024, mayors represent a key foundation for the United States. Given that around 80% of people live in areas classified as urban, I am excited to introduce you all to a committee which focuses on this type of local governance, a largely under-discussed topic area within Model UN. Given the rise of ICE raids, anti-immigration rhetoric, and the divide between federal and local priorities, I am excited to hear what creative solutions you create while navigating your constituents, the president, and your own political ambitions.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [nk4497@princeton.edu](mailto:nk4497@princeton.edu), I am looking forward to meeting you all this April!

Kind Regards,

Nikhil Kuntipuram

TOPIC:  
*Committee of American  
Mayors*

INTRODUCTION

In February of 2026, Operation Metro Surge—a Trump administration-directed immigration enforcement campaign in Minnesota—resulted in federal officers shooting and killing two US citizens, sparking weeks of mass demonstrations and calls for congressional investigations (Sacchetti and LeVine; Alfaro). While the White House frames this operation as necessary to restore “law and order,” civil rights lawyers and local officials describe these measures as an effort to impose punishment on States that do not fully support Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Raymond). This incident has only exacerbated the escalating tensions present between local municipalities and federal immigration enforcement policy.

The Committee of American Mayors takes place after this. We are in a political environment where every mayor, regardless of political affiliation, must grapple with the same question: what is a city’s lawful and legitimate role in immigration enforcement? Mayors have no control over the direct actions of ICE, but can make pivotal decisions

in regards to how much assistance and cooperation they can provide ICE to do its job (American Immigration Council). While the federal government insists on enforcing national law, many city officials argue Washington is attempting to control local institutions, thereby undermining community trust that makes ordinary policing possible (“Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). This argument only grows as the Trump administration expands enforcement measures across the nation (White House; U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Publishes List of Sanctuary Jurisdictions”). Mayors must decide whether to cooperate, outright resist, or something else in between.

In this committee, while the stakes continue to escalate, local municipality leaders have quietly agreed to a confidential summit to discuss strategy that protects their cities, residents, and their political futures. If a Mayor cooperates openly with ICE, they may ease federal retaliation, but risk facing significant community backlash. If a mayor resists, they may protect local legitimacy, but risk lawsuits, funding threats, or increased federal operations.

BACKGROUND

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a US federal agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) created during the post-9/11 restructuring of the federal government (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “History of ICE”; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Homeland Security Act of 2002”). The passing of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 allowed major security related functions to be consolidated under the DHS umbrella within different agencies (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Homeland Security Act of 2002 [Public Law 107–296] (PDF)”). As DHS began operations in 2003, immigration functions that were previously organized under the former Immigration and Naturalization Service were reorganized between three main entities: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection, and ICE.

There are two types of immigration enforcement. First is border enforcement, and while some mayors maintain portions of the US border under their jurisdiction, the large majority of city officials deal with interior enforcement. Interior enforcement under ICE focuses on the identification of individuals which may be removable under federal immigration law, taking them into custody, detaining them, and carrying out removals (U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Who We Are”; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “History of ICE”). ICE also contains an investigative branch, conducting federal criminal investigations into cross-border or transnational crime. These missions can overlap in public perception, but it generates very different considerations for mayors. For example, a city may support federal investigations into trafficking, but resist other practices that turn local policing into routine immigration screenings, impacting the livelihoods of their constituents (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). Local governance becomes important to immigration law enforcement as it can help improve efficiency for ICE operations when local systems cooperate (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g).”; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Archived: Secure Communities”). Over time, this cooperation has been sectioned into three different categories which have become central to mayoral immigration politics (National Conference of State Legislatures; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). First is the concept of immigration detainees. ICE essentially sends requests to local jails asking them to hold a person for a short period of time or provide a notice about a release so ICE can then take that person into federal custody, regardless of the status of their alleged crime (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement,

“Immigration Detainers”). The problem with this is that multiple legal and policy sources emphasize that these requests are generally not mandatory and local jurisdictions in fact face legal risk when they hold someone without a judicial warrant beyond the time they would otherwise be released (National Conference of State Legislatures). This poses a dilemma in that honoring detainees can satisfy federal expectations but can also expose local governments to lawsuits and constitutional claims (Raymond).

The second element of cooperation is with the use of data-sharing systems, connecting local arrests to federal immigration databases (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Archived: Secure Communities”; American Immigration Council, “Secure Communities: A Fact Sheet.”). The best example is Secure Communities, a DHS built program with fingerprint data taken during local booking. Under this program, any fingerprint taken during criminal processing can be checked against DHS immigration databases. If a match occurs, ICE may decide whether to pursue the person. This matters greatly as even if a city claims they are not assisting ICE, automated information flows still make local systems enhance federal enforcement.

Third, there are formal partnership agreements under section 287(g) of federal immigration law. These agreements allow ICE to delegate certain immigration enforcement functions

to trained local officers, under specified supervision and procedures. Supporters of this provision argue that these partnerships improve coordination between local and federal agencies and help remove people who have committed serious crimes. Critics however argue that the program can blur the line between local policing and civil immigration enforcement, increasing the risk of racial profiling, unlawful detention, and community fear that reduces crime reporting (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; National Conference of State Legislatures). Over the past decade, the debate around section 287(g) has been largely tied to sanctuary policies: local rules that limit the extent to which information and cooperation will be given to federal immigration officers (U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Publishes List of Sanctuary Jurisdictions”).

Whenever the federal government elevates immigration enforcement, city leaders are forced to decide whether local institutions will be used as multipliers for federal enforcement, or boundaries will be drawn to protect local governance goals like community trust (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; National Conference of State Legislatures). These decisions in turn affect the legitimacy of both the local municipality and federal authority.

## CURRENT SITUATION

The federal government is now pursuing an aggressive strategy that relies on both federal operations and expanded local partnership (White House; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g).”). Reporting describes the Trump administration’s significant effort to recruit and scale local participation through the 278(g) provision, with some states embracing, and others prohibiting them (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “DHS 287(g) Reaches More Than 1000 Partnerships with State and Local Enforcement...”; National Conference of State Legislatures). Critically, 278(g) changes who carries out immigration enforcement. When local police officers are trained and authorized to perform these duties, ordinary policing encounters can become immigration encounters, reshaping how residents, especially within immigrant communities, view local institutions (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”).

At the same time, the federal government is applying pressure on sanctuary cities through formal designation and public messaging (U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Publishes List of Sanctuary Jurisdictions”; White House). The Department of Justice has publicly issued and updated lists of jurisdictions it identifies as

impeding enforcement of federal immigration law. Whether or not a city accepts this label, this process shapes media narratives and state level reaction surrounding mayoral leaderships.

Public reaction is sharply divided. On one side, many residents and advocacy groups argue that aggressive immigration operations produce significant humanitarian harm, errors surrounding false identity, and trauma within communities (Reuters Photography Staff; Sacchetti and LeVine). This in turn weakens public safety by making people less willing to report crimes or cooperate with investigations (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). On the other side, supporters of the administration’s efforts argue that cities should not obstruct federal law, and that cooperation helps ensure that people accused or convicted of serious crimes are transferred efficiently to federal custody when immigration violations apply (White House; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Immigration Detainers”). The FBI in 2024 reported that the US has simultaneously been experiencing declining violent crime, and additional reporting indicates continued drops across major cities in 2025 (Council on Criminal Justice; Bureau of Justice Statistics). These declines are either interpreted as this heightened level of enforcement results in increased order, or because crime is already decreasing, there is less justification

for sweeping or highly visible federal crackdowns, and that such tactics induce instability.

Against the backdrop of this situation, mayors begin to make choices that are often misunderstood by the public as purely ideological, even when they are rooted in significant tradeoffs (National Conference of State Legislatures; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). A mayor who limits cooperation may be trying to avoid legal liability associated with detaining individuals without warrants, while a mayor who cooperates may be responding to their constituents’ demands for increased enforcement (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Immigration Detainers”). The mayor who doesn’t cooperate though may still face federal consequences of increased ICE presence within their jurisdiction, particularly given the administration’s demonstrated willingness to take action against jurisdictions it views as noncompliant (Raymond; U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Publishes List of Sanctuary Jurisdictions”). This committee therefore asks delegates to not consider what federal immigration policy should be, given that they have no jurisdiction over this (National Conference of State Legislatures). Rather, focus on what mayors can do now, legally, operationally, and politically, to protect their residents, preserve local governance, and avoid federal retribution.

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## POSITIONS & PORTFOLIO POWERS

### **Eric Johnson — Dallas, Texas**

Johnson wants to appear tough on crime and therefore responsive to federal pressure, especially given that Texas politics are often hostile to sanctuary policies (Fechter and Lopez; Office of the Texas Governor, “Texas Bans Sanctuary Cities”). He has a willingness to coordinate on serious offenders and organized crime (Office of the Texas Governor, “Texas Bans Sanctuary Cities”). Moreover, Dallas business interests may also quietly push for stability and workforce continuity, while he must also consider his conservative constituencies' demand for visible enforcement alignment with the federal government.

### **Mattie Parker — Fort Worth, Texas**

Fort Worth's electorate includes a very strong pro-enforcement bloc; the city wants to avoid being labeled a sanctuary jurisdiction (City of Fort Worth, “Mayor's Office”; Office of the Texas Governor, “Texas Bans Sanctuary Cities”). Parker is likely to support cooperation mechanisms that are framed as targeting violent crime, while resisting anything that triggers mass unrest or diverts police from local priorities. The goal is balancing the city's capacity and limited resources while supporting the federal government's immigration enforcement efforts.

### **David Holt — Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Holt emphasizes keeping the city functional (City of Oklahoma City, “Mayor”). His strategy may involve coordination with federal partners on high-risk cases, but avoid becoming a symbol-city for extreme raids given the public backlash (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). Constituents may be split, as some demand strict enforcement, while others fear inducing further civil-rights harms. Holt insists on transparency, notification protocols, and clear delineation between local policing and federal immigration work.

### **Jerry Dyer — Fresno, California**

Dyer's law-enforcement background and Fresno's agricultural economy create cross-pressures: visible enforcement credibility vs. dependence on immigrant communities and fear of destabilizing the workforce (City of Fresno, “Mayor”; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). He may argue for “public safety first” cooperation, focusing on serious crimes only, while criticizing broad sweeps that create panic and reduce crime reporting. Fresno may also fear being adversely affected given California's sanctuary politics (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; California Legislative Information, SB 54).

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### **Mark Freeman — Mesa, Arizona**

Arizona is a state where immigration politics are intense and where constituents often demand enforcement (National Conference of State Legislatures). Freeman is likely to support strong collaboration with federal law enforcement, potentially including expanded 287(g) participation, but will want safeguards to reduce lawsuits and public backlash (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g).”; Raymond). He may prioritize optics: “we’re targeting criminals, not families,” and push for federal funding to offset detention and policing costs.

### **Bobby Dyer — Virginia Beach, Virginia**

Virginia Beach politics tend to reward stability and public safety messaging (City of Virginia Beach, “Mayor’s Office”). Dyer can frame cooperation as support for law enforcement and military-linked federal institutions, while remaining cautious about being pulled into headline-making raids that disrupt tourism and civic calm. Expect a “cooperate quietly” approach—information sharing and jail coordination—paired with public calls for professionalism and clear rules of engagement.

### **Karen Goh — Bakersfield, California**

Bakersfield’s local politics often skew more conservative than coastal California cities (City of Bakersfield, “Meet Our Mayor”). Goh may adopt a tougher stance than other California mayors, leaning towards increased federal cooperation to signal public safety seriousness (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; City of Bakersfield, “Meet Our Mayor”). Managing state-level constraints however will be a challenge (California Legislative Information, SB 54). Given her conservative constituency within a largely liberal state, she could emerge as a “bridge” figure across party lines, supporting enforcement but opposing operations that generate protests and exacerbate public reactions.

### **Renard Johnson — El Paso, Texas**

Johnson considers that El Paso is deeply tied to cross-border life, and overly-intense interior enforcement could destabilize trust and commerce within the region (City of El Paso, “Mayor”). Johnson would focus on genuine trafficking threats while also protecting ordinary residents and local service systems. He will demand federal support in exchange for any cooperation.

### **Rick Blangiardi — Honolulu, Hawaii**

Honolulu’s immigration politics are shaped less by border symbolism and more by tourism and labor markets (City and County of Honolulu, “About the Mayor”). Blangiardi may frame the issue as “keep Honolulu safe and open for business,” resisting disruptive raids that harm the visitor economy. He may offer limited cooperation on serious offenders while advocating for federal restraint and clear communication from the Trump Administration.

### **Jacob Frey — Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Frey is directly impacted by the backlash from Operation Metro Surge (Sacchetti and LeVine; Alfaro). He would adopt a civil-rights-forward posture, demanding investigations, body-camera requirements, and limits on federal operations inside the city. At the same time, he must reassure residents about safety and avoid being blamed for disorder given the political climate. Frey may push coalition-building among mayors to secure injunctions, protect city budgets, and any other measures that would reduce the risk of further violence within the city.

**Zohran Mamdani — New York City, New York**

Mamdani leads a city with strong sanctuary provisions and has garnered significant media attention (NYC.gov, “Remarks as Prepared: Mayor Zohran Mamdani Delivers Weather Update”; U.S. Department of Justice, “Justice Department Publishes List of Sanctuary Jurisdictions”). He would take a high-profile resistance stance by defending sanctuary laws, criticizing federal intimidation tactics, and building public messaging around trust and due process (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; NYC.gov, “Remarks as Prepared: Mayor Zohran Mamdani Delivers Weather Update”). He will also face pressure to address high-visibility crime incidents that opponents use to attack sanctuary policies.

**Muriel Bowser — Washington, DC**

Bowser maintains a fragile relationship with federal agencies (Council of the District of Columbia). She has experience navigating federal interventions with the institution of the national guard. She would attempt to oppose federal overreach and any actions that erode home rule, while selectively cooperating to prevent total federal takeover narratives. Bowser must focus on protecting DC institutions from becoming political props for the administration’s immigration agenda.

**Karen Bass — Los Angeles, California**

Bass has already been a legal target of the Department of Justice over Los Angeles sanctuary policies (U.S. Department of Justice, “The Justice Department Files Lawsuit Against Sanctuary City Policies in Los Angeles, California.”). Her aim is to defend constitutional boundaries and denounce ICE raids as destabilizing. Given LA’s scale means she must also manage the impacts of high policing demands and large-scale protests. She would bargain with the administration only if concessions produce concrete protections such as funding guarantees or limits on ICE tactics.

**Brandon Johnson — Chicago, Illinois**

Johnson would claim that federal tactics terrorize neighborhoods and undermine public safety by reducing trust with the police (Reuters Photography Staff; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). Therefore, he would push for strict city protocols while also needing to address residents exhausted and worried about the disorder. He would coordinate closely with other big-city mayors and civil-rights groups, and demand transparency and limits on federal force.

**Katie Wilson — Seattle, Washington**

Seattle is a city where immigrant’s rights are highly emphasized whilst also focusing on managing the civil unrest (City of Seattle, “Mayor”; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). Wilson is likely to defend sanctuary-style separations between local services and immigration enforcement, while pushing for clear operational boundaries to prevent violent clashes. She stresses that federal enforcement can proceed but cities should not be coerced into providing data and information.

## Committee of American Mayors

### **Quinton Lucas — Kansas City, Missouri**

Lucas aims to keep crime down, keep the city funded, and avoid becoming a national target (City of Kansas City, Missouri). He may support cooperation on serious offenders while rejecting implementation of local police (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g).”; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). Lucas could become a swing vote between “resist” and “cooperate” blocs by pushing for negotiated standards involving notification rules, cost reimbursement, and noninterference with local policing priorities.

### **Barbara Lee — Oakland, California**

Lee would prioritize preventing profiling, protecting community trust, and resisting policies that convert local policing into immigration enforcement (Har; American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”). At the same time, she must address public safety anxieties and governance credibility. Lee would push for oversight mechanisms and data transparency on ICE encounters.

### **Michelle Wu — Boston, Massachusetts**

Wu is a named defendant in the Department of Justice’s Boston sanctuary lawsuit (U.S. Department of Justice, “Department of Justice Sues City of Boston, Mayor Michelle Wu Over Sanctuary City Laws.”). She believes that sanctuary rules are about constitutional boundaries and community policing and not about shielding illicit activity. Wu would emphasize coordination between cities to create a concerted effort to protect immigrant’s rights, whilst concurrently managing a tenuous relationship with the federal government.

### **Kirk Watson — Austin, Texas**

Watson faces pressure from state leadership and pro-enforcement constituencies while Austin’s electorate expects protection of immigrant communities and civil liberties (Office of the Texas Governor, “Texas Bans Sanctuary Cities”; National Conference of State Legislatures). Watson must manage both sets of expectations, by resisting being labeled as “lawless,” cooperate on severe cases, but also fight deputization and mass operations.

### **Joe Hogsett — Indianapolis, Indiana**

Hogsett, like others, emphasizes city capacity: budgets, staffing, and public safety outcomes (Bureau of Justice Statistics; Council on Criminal Justice). He may be open to cooperation if it comes with resources and clear limits, but wary of unpredictable federal surges that strain local police resources and spark civil unrest. Politically, he may avoid ideological language and seek “managed cooperation.”

### **Craig Greenberg — Louisville, Kentucky**

Greenberg will be sensitive to policing and civil-rights scrutiny, given Louisville’s recent history of intense national attention on law enforcement governance (Bureau of Justice Statistics). He may focus on cooperation on high-risk cases while paired with strong demands for oversight, transparency, and noninterference with local priorities.

**Todd Gloria — San Diego, California**

San Diego’s proximity to the border means that federal presence is constant and therefore the city leadership must manage the cross-border economy and humanitarian issues (American Immigration Council, “Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities.’”; California Legislative Information, SB 54). He would push for clear distinctions between local policing and federal immigration enforcement, and to advocate federal support for shelters and immigrant rights.