



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Washington

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Department of Justice Accuses States of Undermining the Constitution and Putting Public Safety at Risk

On Wednesday, May 27th, the Department of Justice filed lawsuits against the states of [Maine](#), [Washington](#), [Oregon](#), and [Massachusetts](#), challenging their policies that deny confidential license plates to federal agents. These lawsuits come after each state refused to rescind their policies in response to a letter from the Department explaining the policies' illegality on constitutional grounds.

As alleged in the complaint, these policies are unconstitutional and threaten operational effectiveness and agent and public safety at a time where federal law enforcement agents are facing harassment and heightened tensions with portions of the communities they serve. If federal agents cannot use confidential plates, criminals can track and evade law enforcement and disrupt critical intelligence and takedown operations that result in the removal of drug smugglers, human traffickers, pedophiles, and other very violent criminals from our communities. There is no justification for states to deny confidential license plates to federal agents, and doing so unnecessarily increases safety risks.

“This Department of Justice will exercise any and all lawful authorities to support the brave men and women of law enforcement,” said Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche. “Law enforcement officers risk their lives every day to keep Americans safe and must be able to carry out their duties effectively. By denying undercover license plates to DHS components, including ICE, while issuing them to their own state agencies, these governors are pursuing discriminatory and obstructionist policies against federal law enforcement. These actions undermine federal immigration enforcement, allow dangerous criminals to escape justice, and terrorize American communities.”

“I’m grateful to represent our law enforcement partners in this lawsuit to protect their ability to safely and effectively do their jobs. This lawsuit has one single goal: ensure that these brave men and women can remove the worst of the worst from our community without unnecessarily jeopardizing their own safety and public safety,” said First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano.

Acting Attorney General Blanche has instructed the Department's Civil Division to identify state and local laws, policies, and practices that facilitate violations of federal laws or impede lawful federal operations. This lawsuit is the latest in a series of lawsuits brought by the Civil Division targeting illegal policies designed to thwart federal law enforcement across the country.