Building on Baldy's Success: Environmental Scholar to Head Interdisciplinary Center; Associate Professor Rick Su: Immigration Law Controversy Puts Arizona Cities in 'Legal Limbo'

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol23/iss1/23
from taking any steps to restrict the full enforcement of immigration laws—irrespective of funding or its effect on community relations.”

In other words, while the court’s preliminary injunction specifically bars Arizona from requiring that local law enforcement officials check a person’s immigration status in the course of their duties, it left in place provisions that deprived local communities of the discretion not to participate in immigration enforcement, Su points out.

“The law also authorizes private lawsuits against cities if there is any evidence to suggest that they are discouraging immigration enforcement,” Su says, “all of which leaves Arizona cities in a legal limbo: neither required to enforce immigration laws, but also prohibited from instructing its officials not to.”

Su believes that these provisions will have as much of a negative effect on Arizona residents as those parts of the law that were specifically blocked, especially for those who reside in the state’s minority communities.

Su has written about how the proposed immigration law stifles local power and discretion in favor of state control in an earlier commentary.

“The preliminary injunction does a lot of things, but it specifically leaves many of those provisions that I questioned intact,” he says. “What this shows is that even when the first round of legal challenges against Arizona’s new immigration law are resolved, important questions about state and local relations will likely still remain.”