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# It's the U.S. vs. California – who's got the winning case?

BY STEPHEN MAGAGNINI AND ANITA CHABRIA

*smagagnini@sacbee.com*

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In the case of the United States vs. California, who will win?

The fight over how undocumented immigrants in California are treated is now a matter for federal courts to decide after the Trump administration this week sued the state to invalidate a trio of "sanctuary" laws.

The state argues it can't be forced to act as a federal immigration enforcer and that its laws are necessary to protect its estimated 2.6 million undocumented residents, maintain community trust and shield its economy.

The federal government argues California's laws go beyond non-cooperation and interfere with the federal power to regulate immigration, causing a constitutional crisis by allowing a state to meddle in foreign affairs and creating an "atmosphere of defiance" that puts federal officers at risk, according to court papers.

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It's a 10th Amendment fight with roles reversed from past fights between conservatives and liberals.

"Historically, national power has been on the side of civil rights, and states' rights has been equated with regressive policies, racist policies," said Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law. "That's the irony."

Despite the passionate politics, the legal decision will rely on the merits of the arguments and past case law.

The first legal fight will come in the next few months when the federal court for the Eastern District of California is expected to rule on a preliminary injunction U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions is seeking.

The government has asked for a first hearing on April 5, though that may change.

If the Sacramento-based court grants that injunction in its entirety, it would block California from fully enforcing the three sanctuary laws until the case is resolved - which likely won't happen for years. Legal experts expect the case will be appealed

to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which has ruled against Trump's travel ban in the past, and ultimately the U.S. Supreme Court, regardless of which side prevails.

The targeted California laws are Senate Bill 54, Assembly Bill 103 and Assembly Bill 450.

It's possible - maybe likely - the court would grant a partial injunction that doesn't knock down all three. Legal experts said each one will be reviewed separately, and the federal government faces varying odds on each.

### Local law enforcement role in federal immigration

Senate Bill 54 is the state's main sanctuary law that restricts how local law enforcement interacts with federal immigration authorities. It has the best chance of withstanding the court challenge, legal scholars said.

"Here the state seems on the strongest ground, because the Congress has said the government can't coerce states and local government," said Chemerinsky.

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Go ahead, Mr. President. Bring it on