



City of Ojai

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ojai Passes CARE Act, Joining Regional Movement to Protect Immigrant and LGBTQ+ Communities

On July 8, 2025, the Ojai City Council unanimously passed the *Ojai C.A.R.E. Community Autonomy, Rights, and Equality policy* — an affirmation of the city's core values of compassion, equity, and community responsibility. The new policy, introduced by Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Lang and Council Member Leslie Rule, establishes city protocols for navigating changes in federal administration policies, particularly those related to immigration and healthcare.

Ojai joins a growing regional movement with this legislation. In June, the City of Ventura passed a similar ordinance, reflecting a growing consensus across Ventura County in support of sanctuary values and inclusive governance. While the two policies were developed independently, both cities share aligned missions: to create communities where every resident feels safe, respected, and protected.

Additionally, the Ojai CARE Policy aligns with SB 54, the California Values Act; AB 2792, the TRUTH Act; and other relevant California policies. It outlines protocols for city staff and officials to follow regarding the protection of privacy for our residents.

“We intentionally named our policy the CARE Act to express solidarity with what’s becoming a countywide movement,” said Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Lang. “It’s a signal that we are in solidarity with other cities in the county taking a stand for dignity in the face of rising hostility and fear. We believe it’s important to express our belief that all who reside and work here deserve dignity and respect.”

Councilmember Leslie Rule added, “Each day, we hear of Ojai residents living in fear of the new federal policies. Diversity enriches our community, and no one should live in fear because of the color of their skin, their gender, sexual orientation, or anything that makes them different. Mayor Pro Tem Lang and I intend to continue this conversation by hosting workshops and joining countywide efforts to distribute information about how we as a community can help our immigrant neighbors or anyone who feels targeted.”

Mayor Andy Gillman expressed solidarity with Councilmembers Lang and Rule. “The fact that this passed 5-0 says a lot about our community’s commitment to compassion and equity,” he said. “We will comply with federal and state laws; Our policy defines how we do that while upholding our values.”

The CARE Act reaffirms Ojai's longstanding commitment to human rights. As part of the Act's implementation, Ojai will launch a "Know Your Rights" webpage, organize community workshops, and direct the City Manager to deliver a report outlining implementation costs, accountability structures, and whistleblower protections.

"The CARE Act is a promise that Ojai will not lend our hands or our hearts to fear-driven overreach," Lang said.

Rule added, "It's a reflection of the city's values and a message to all who live here that Ojai will continue to be a sanctuary of equity, inclusion, and love."

Lang and Rule plan to host a workshop with a panel of speakers to help field questions, address concerns, and share resources. Details regarding the proposed workshop will be released once available via the City's social media channels and through local media.

For more information, visit ojai.ca.gov or contact the City Manager's office at (805) 646-5581.