



# CITIES *for* ACTION

## Letter from Local Leaders

January 2021

As leaders who are part of Cities for Action, a coalition of nearly 200 mayors and county executives that advocates for pro-immigrant federal policies, we are proud to present to the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress a vision for immigration that will support the safety, health, and well-being of our communities.

We represent diverse jurisdictions from across the country—large and small, urban and rural, in “red” and “blue” states—that are united by our understanding that immigration uplifts and enriches our communities. We recognize the pivotal role immigrants play in our cities and counties. And we know that pro-immigrant policies and programs support and empower our localities to become even more inclusive, equitable, and civically engaged.

In the last four years, we have come together repeatedly to make our voices heard in response to attacks by the Trump Administration against immigrants and refugees. From defending DACA to responding to the public charge rule and attacks on welcoming cities, we have used our platforms to speak out against xenophobia and racism and to urge a federal approach that will help our communities thrive.

Now, as we greet a new year and new Presidential Administration and Congress, federal leadership on immigration is more important than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the contributions of immigrant essential workers and the interdependence of our communities, while also laying bare in sobering terms the urgency of addressing the structural and institutional inequities that have devastated our Black and Brown communities.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress to ensure an equitable response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic that includes our immigrant residents. We further set out the following priorities on immigration for our federal partners.

## **I. Partner with local leaders to support the successful economic, social, and civic integration of immigrant families**

- ◆ Establish a White House Office of New Americans;
- ◆ Invest in additional resources, coordination, and technical support for language access at all levels of government;
- ◆ Enhance educational and employment opportunities for immigrants that support local economies; and
- ◆ Increase access to citizenship.

## **II. Address immigration barriers that marginalize immigrant residents, separate families, and limit our communities' capacity to thrive**

- ◆ Create a pathway to citizenship;
- ◆ Provide meaningful and fair access to immigration benefits and status;
- ◆ Keep families together by rethinking enforcement and shifting away from detention;
- ◆ Create a national funding stream for immigration legal services; and
- ◆ Give local economies a boost by reforming employment-based immigration opportunities.

## **III. Respect for local decision-making and expertise on public safety and public health**

- ◆ End efforts to condition federal funding on local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement;
- ◆ Respect local public safety and the administration of justice; and
- ◆ Facilitate greater support for immigrant crime victims who help law enforcement.

## **IV. Recognize the role of local governments in upholding our nation's values and in addressing global challenges**

- ◆ Raise the annual refugee admissions ceiling and rebuild the resettlement infrastructure;
- ◆ Remove cruel and unfair barriers to asylum; and
- ◆ Recognize the strength and needs of transnational communities in responding to humanitarian and environmental disasters.

**We look forward to working in pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable country for all.**

**SIGNED**

Kathy M. Sheehan, Mayor,  
City of Albany, NY

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor,  
City of Albuquerque, NM

Mike Coffman, Mayor,  
City of Aurora, CO

Steve Adler, Mayor,  
City of Austin, TX

Mayor Lauren McLean,  
Mayor, City of Boise, ID

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor,  
City of Boston, MA

Sam Weaver, Mayor,  
City of Boulder, CO

William W. Moehle,  
Supervisor, Town of Brighton,  
NY

Byron W. Brown, Mayor  
City of Buffalo, NY

Lydia E. Lavelle, Mayor,  
Town of Carrboro, NC

Pam Hemminger, Mayor,  
Town of Chapel Hill, NC

Vi Lyles, Mayor,  
City of Charlotte, NC

Thomas G. Ambrosino, City  
Manager, City of Chelsea, MA

Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor,  
City of Chicago, IL

Mary Casillas Salas, Mayor,  
City of Chula Vista, CA

Patrick L. Wojahn, Mayor,  
City of College Park, MD

Toni Preckwinkle, President,  
Board of Commissioners  
Cook County, IL

Michael B. Hancock, Mayor,  
City and County of Denver,  
CO

Nick Hernandez,  
City Manager,  
City of Dodge City, KS

Marcia Leclerc, Mayor,  
Town of East Hartford, CT

David C. Stout,  
County Commissioner,  
County of El Paso, TX

Dianne Martinez,  
Mayor of Emeryville, CA

Sylvester Turner, Mayor,  
City of Houston, TX

Steven M. Fulop, Mayor,  
City of Jersey City, NJ

Robert Garcia, Mayor,  
City of Long Beach, CA

Greg Fischer, Mayor,  
Louisville-Jefferson County  
Metro Government, KY

Eric Garcetti, Mayor,  
City of Los Angeles, CA

Hilda L. Solis, Chair of the  
Los Angeles County Board  
of Supervisors, Los Angeles  
County, CA

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Mayor, City of Madison, WI

Jacob Frey, Mayor,  
City of Minneapolis, MN

Jennifer Gregerson, Mayor,  
City of Mukilteo, WA

John Cooper, Mayor,  
Metropolitan Government  
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County, TN

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City of New York, NY

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City of Oakland, CA

James Kenney, Mayor,  
City of Philadelphia, PA

William Peduto, Mayor,  
City of Pittsburgh, PA

Kurt R. Metzger, Mayor,  
City of Pleasant Ridge, MI

Ted Wheeler, Mayor,  
City of Portland, OR

Mark Freda, Mayor,  
Municipality of Princeton, NJ

Tom Butt, Mayor,  
City of Richmond, CA

Melvin Carter, Mayor,  
City of Saint Paul, MN

Erin Mendenhall, Mayor,  
Salt Lake City, UT

Todd Gloria, Mayor,  
City of San Diego, CA

Celine Kennelly and  
Mario Paz, Chair and Vice  
Chair, Immigrant Rights  
Commission, City and County  
of San Francisco, CA

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City of San Jose, CA

Pauline Russo Cutter, Mayor,  
City of San Leandro, CA

Sue Himmelrich, Mayor,  
City of Santa Monica, CA

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor,  
City of Seattle, WA

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor,  
City of Somerville, MA

Lyda Krewson, Mayor,  
City of St. Louis, MO

Ronald Filippelli, Mayor,  
Borough of State College, PA

Regina Romero, Mayor,  
City of Tucson, AZ

Allan Ekberg, Mayor,  
City of Tukwila, WA

Will Frohlich,  
Mayor of Victor, ID

Lindsey P. Horvath, Mayor,  
City of West Hollywood, CA

Jim Provenza, Chair, Board of  
Supervisors, Yolo County, CA