



April 12, 2017

An Open Letter to President Trump and Members of Congress:

President Trump, together with Republican members of Congress, have begun to implement a punitive and unconstitutional anti-immigrant agenda. In addition to promising to end the DACA program and depriving hundreds of thousands of immigrants of their dignity and security, as well as the ability to work and grow our economy, they have threatened to cut funding to local governments that are unwilling to subsidize or be co-opted by badly broken federal imperatives of mass deportation and family separation.

Hundreds of jurisdictions across the country have policies limiting local law enforcement from being co-opted to implement unjust federal immigration policy. These so-called “sanctuary” policies are ultimately about promoting community safety by treating all residents equally and refusing to alienate people we need to report crimes, serve as witnesses, and promote public health. We are committed to devoting local resources to local priorities and to upholding our Constitution.

Last month, Local Progress members came together in New York City to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and expanding sanctuary policies. In the face of threats to deny funding to localities for policies that keep communities safe and are undoubtedly lawful, we pledged to fight back together as one. Local lawmakers know what is best for our communities and we will not be cowed by federal attempts to commandeer local governments and local resources for a draconian and unjust immigration system.

Today, as local elected officials committed to safe and inclusive communities for all of our residents, we are calling on members of Congress and Donald Trump to retreat from their threats.

These policies uphold the Constitution: Our cities and counties should not, and have absolutely no legal obligation to be involved in, federal immigration enforcement, and are completely within their rights to refuse to do so. ICE simply cannot violate the Fourth Amendment of the US Constitution by encouraging local police to imprison immigrants without a warrant. Moreover, forcing cities to spend local resources enforcing an unfunded federal policy agenda also violates the Tenth Amendment, which prevents the federal government from coercing state and local governments to do their bidding.

Policies that welcome and include immigrants benefit all of us: These policies make it possible for victims and witnesses of crime to come forward without fear of retaliation. They foster trust between police and community members that many sheriffs and police chiefs have noted is crucial to their work and make our communities safer.

Enforcing federal immigration policy is the sole responsibility of the federal government: The Department of Homeland Security, not local governments, bears the responsibility for enforcing federal immigration policies. It receives billions in funding annually to carry out this obligation.

Our national immigration policies are unjust and broken: Current immigration law is unfair to the millions of hard working immigrants who are the backbone of our cities and economy. A significant majority of the American public supports reforming these policies, at the federal level, to help immigrants come out of the shadows. Congress should focus its energies on creating an immigration system that works, as opposed to holding localities hostage to an ineffective, illegal ideological agenda that hurts all of us and makes cities less safe.

Signed,

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