

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Joseph Biden, Jr.  
President-Elect  
Office of the President-Elect  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden,

We write to you today as elected officials representing communities that have placed limitations on coordination between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement, often known as sanctuary jurisdictions. Our communities have prioritized protecting immigrants and refugees from the constant barrage of attacks leveled by President Trump and his administration over the last four years.

We congratulate you on your historic victory in the 2020 Presidential Election. Your resounding victory -- with the largest vote percentage obtained against an incumbent President since 1932<sup>1</sup> -- clearly provides you with a mandate to repudiate the policies of hate and division that have been promulgated by the current administration over the last four years.

Today we are urging you to use your executive authority to immediately repeal, end, or replace many of the policies that the Trump administration has instituted to punish and demonize immigrant and refugee communities. These policies have not made our jurisdictions safer, nor resulted in a just or equitable immigration system, and have harmed the safety and cohesion of our communities.

We are also urging you to take steps to repair the damage done to families, our communities, and the reputation of our nation by the inhumane acts of the Trump Administration.

Most heinously, the Trump Administration's policy of family separation has resulted in the callous separation of hundreds of children from their parents. As of October 2020, at least 545 children have still not been reunited with their families<sup>2</sup>. The immediate reunification of these families must be a top priority of your administration.

In addition there are several policies you can take action on to improve our ability to provide public services and ensure community safety. Such actions include:

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<sup>1</sup> Rubin, Jennifer "[The Size of Joe Biden's victory matters. And it is huge.](#)" *washingtonpost.com*, *The Washington Post*, 4 December 2020

<sup>2</sup> Alvarez, Priscilla, "[Parents of 545 children separated at US border still can't be found](#)" *cnn.com*, *CNN*, 20 October 2020

- **Repealing Executive Orders 13880 and 13888 (2019), which instructs the Census Bureau to collect citizenship information while conducting the 2020 Census and necessitates that local and state governments provide affirmative consent to refugee resettlement;**

These two Executive Orders have seeded mistrust and fear within our communities towards important processes such as the decennial Census, which determines allocations of federal resources and representation, and refugee resettlement, a staple of the American tradition of welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution. While many of these efforts have been slowed or stopped by the Courts, their existence as federal policy continues to perpetuate fear and mistrust within our communities.

- **Nullifying Presidential Proclamation 10014 (2020), *Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants Who Present Risk to the U.S. Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the COVID-19 Outbreak*;**

President Trump has exploited the COVID-19 crisis to implement harsh restrictions on immigration that will harm our social cohesion, fail to protect jobs, and may potentially cause disruptions in the labor market. We urge you to repeal this proclamation and work with Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration package that incorporates the necessary protections for workers recovering from the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Instructing your Department of Homeland Security to immediately retract the *Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds* rule implemented on February 24, 2020, which reduces the number of people eligible for green cards and other visas based on broadly-interpreted assumptions of what makes them dependent or likely to be dependent on government services;**

The Public Charge rule serves as nothing more than a wealth test for those seeking the ability to immigrate to our nation. Our country has prided itself on welcoming huddled masses from around the world, regardless of their wealth or privilege, and this rule abrogates those traditions under the guise of preserving public resources.

- **Directing your Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and all other relevant departments and agencies to refrain from taking immigration enforcement actions at sensitive community locations such as courthouses, hospitals, religious institutions, and educational facilities;**

Maintaining the trust and confidence of all members of our communities is a critical component of our efforts to keep our communities safe. Every member of our community, including those who are undocumented or with loved ones who are undocumented, must

have confidence that they can call 911, testify in court, and seek essential public services without fear of arbitrary arrest, detention, and deportation.

Five states and at least 633 counties have enacted policies limiting local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration enforcement efforts.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the Trump Administration has taken multiple actions, with various levels of success, to punitively punish our jurisdictions for these policies. Your administration can begin to restore trust in our local law enforcement efforts among our immigrant and refugee communities. Specifically, we are urging you to take the following measures as soon as possible upon your inauguration on January 20, 2021:

- Repeal Executive Order 13768 (2017), *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States*, which has served as the foundation of the Trump Administration's attacks on our jurisdictions;
- Instruct your Department of Justice to halt all pending and ongoing legal actions against sanctuary jurisdictions, including, but not limited to *City of Chicago v. William Barr No. 19-3290* and *State of New York et al. v. US Department of Justice No. 19-267*, and related cases; and
- Order your Department of Justice to end the prioritization of grant programs that give preference to jurisdictions that cooperate with federal immigration enforcement efforts

Many of the actions taken by the Trump Administration have been challenged in court, and we urge your Administration to end all ongoing litigation related to these issues. Ending the aforementioned policies will have a positive impact on our ability to protect the public health and safety of our communities.

We are hopeful that your administration will act swiftly upon taking office to end these harmful policies and begin to heal the divisive wounds inflicted by the Trump Administration on our communities.

Sincerely,

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<sup>3</sup>Lee, Jasmine, et al. "[What Are Sanctuary Cities?](#)" *nytimes.com, The New York Times*, 6 February 2017



Jessica Vega Pederson  
Multnomah County Commissioner

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