October 10, 2018  
(updated October 15, 2018)

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We write to register the strong opposition of the nation’s mayors to the new regulations on “public charge” that your Department is proposing. While we understand the intent of the “public charge” test that has been in place for decades, the new proposed rule takes this principle to an extreme and, if adopted, would ultimately punish immigrants for accessing non-cash benefits designed to help families succeed and thrive in the United States and become contributing members of our communities.

Many great Americans came to this country as immigrants, arriving with nothing and starting their journey from the bottom rung of the economic ladder. Our history has shown us that access to critical benefits is often necessary for a short time in order to help immigrants become assimilated and ultimately prosper in their new country. Clearly, it would not be in the best interest of our communities to impose further restrictions on non-cash benefits that would limit immigrants’ growth, economic prosperity, and pursuit of happiness as Americans.

In our view, this proposal will compromise children’s health, nutrition, and development; impact access to health care; reduce housing options; and negatively affect our local economies. It will force families to choose between the help they need and the people they love. Further, by disrupting many people’s pathways to citizenship, the proposed rule would also deprive immigrants and cities alike of the well-documented benefits of naturalization on earnings, employment, and homeownership.

Furthermore, an attempt to enact this new regulation that significantly expands the definition of “public charge” via a federal rule is wrong and prevents a more appropriate study of this issue with proper Congressional involvement.

As mayors, we see firsthand, every day, the positive impact that immigrants have on our communities. They contribute in countless ways to our economic and cultural strength. Our cities and our great nation were built by immigrants and are continually reenergized by them. This misguided policy will hurt our people, our cities, and our nation. It denies our history and jeopardizes our future.

At the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors this past June, we unanimously adopted policy calling on the Administration to drop any expansion of the “public charge” rule. With this letter, we reiterate this call and urge you to abandon this misguided rule now.

Sincerely,
Mayor Steve Benjamin
Columbia, South Carolina
President

Mayor Bryan K. Barnett
Rochester Hills, Michigan
Vice President

Mayor Greg Fischer
Louisville, Kentucky
Second Vice President

Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz
Burnsville, Minnesota
Past President

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza
Providence, Rhode Island
Co-Chair, Immigration
Reform Task Force

Mayor Tom Tait
Anaheim, California
Co-Chair, Immigration
Reform Task Force

Mayor Eric Garcetti
Los Angeles, California
Chair, USCM Latino Alliance

Mayor Bill de Blasio
New York City, New York
Chair, Cities of Opportunity
Task Force

Tom Cochrane
CEO and Executive Director

Mayor John Giles
Mesa, Arizona

Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Jose, California

Mayor Muriel Bowser
Washington, DC

Mayor Mark W. Mitchell
Tempe, Arizona

Mayor Pauline Russo Cutter
San Leandro, California

Mayor Francis X. Suarez
Miami, Florida

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Tucson, Arizona

Mayor David Terrazas
Santa Cruz, California

Mayor Frank C. Ortis
Pembroke Pines, Florida

Mayor Mary Casillas Salas
Chula Vista, California

Mayor Ted Winterer
Santa Monica, California

Mayor Geraldine ‘Jeri’ Muoio Ph.D.
West Palm Beach, Florida

Mayor Sam Hindi
Foster City, California

Mayor Patrick J. Furey
Torrance, California

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms
Atlanta, Georgia

Mayor Lily Mei
Fremont, California

Mayor John J. Duran
West Hollywood, California

Mayor Rahm Emanuel
Chicago, Illinois

Mayor Robert Garcia
Long Beach, California

Mayor Suzanne ‘Zan’ Jones
Boulder, Colorado

Mayor Thomas P. McNamara
Rockford, Illinois

Mayor Leonard Siegel
Mountain View, California

Mayor Michael B. Hancock
Denver, Colorado

Mayor Karen M. Freeman-Wilson
Gary, Indiana

Mayor Jill Techel
Napa, California

Mayor Joe Ganim
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Mayor Pete Buttigieg
South Bend, Indiana

Mayor Libby Schaaf
Oakland, California

Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc
East Hartford, Connecticut

Mayor Catherine E. Pugh
Baltimore, Maryland

Mayor Thomas K. Butt
Richmond, California

Mayor Luke Bronin
Hartford, Connecticut

Mayor Patrick L. Wojahn
College Park, Maryland

Mayor Darrell Steinberg
Sacramento, California

Mayor Toni N. Harp
New Haven, Connecticut

Mayor Jeffrey Z. Slavin
Somerset, Maryland

Mayor London N. Breed
San Francisco, California

Mayor Shari Cantor
West Hartford, Connecticut

Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Boston, Massachusetts
Mayor Yvonne M. Spicer
Framingham, Massachusetts

Mayor Andrew J. Ginther
Columbus, Ohio

Mayor Ron Nirenberg
San Antonio, Texas

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Somerville, Massachusetts

Mayor Nan Whaley
Dayton, Ohio

Mayor Jackie Biskupski
Salt Lake City, Utah

Mayor Jacob Frey
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mayor Lydia L. Mihalik
Findlay, Ohio

Mayor Allison Silberberg
Alexandria, Virginia

Mayor Melvin Carter
St. Paul, Minnesota

Mayor Michael P. Summers
Lakewood, Ohio

Mayor Cassie Franklin
Everett, Washington

Mayor Sylvester 'Sly' James Jr.
Kansas City, Missouri

Mayor David J. Berger
Lima, Ohio

Mayor John Marchione
Redmond, Washington

Mayor Lyda Krewson
St. Louis, Missouri

Mayor Denny Doyle
Beaverton, Oregon

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan
Seattle, Washington

Mayor Debra March
Henderson, Nevada

Mayor Lucy K. Vinis
Eugene, Oregon

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Tacoma, Washington

Mayor Steven Fulop
Jersey City, New Jersey

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Portland, Oregon

Mayor Allan Ekberg
Tukwila, Washington

Mayor Francis 'Mac' Womack III
North Brunswick, New Jersey

Mayor Jim Kenney
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mayor Paul R. Soglin
Madison, Wisconsin

Mayor Brian C. Wahler
Piscataway, New Jersey

Mayor William Peduto
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Adrian O. Mapp
Plainfield, New Jersey

Mayor James A. Diossa
Central Falls, Rhode Island

Mayor Paul R. Soglin
Madison, Wisconsin

Mayor Liz Lempert
Princeton, New Jersey

Mayor Kim McMillan
Clarksville, Tennessee

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Kathy M. Sheehan
Albany, New York

Mayor David Briley
Nashville, Tennessee

Mayor Paul R. Soglin
Madison, Wisconsin

Mayor Byron W. Brown
Buffalo, New York

Mayor Steve Adler
Austin, Texas

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Lovely Warren
Rochester, New York

Mayor Antonio 'Tony' Martinez
Brownsville, Texas

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Lydia Lavelle
Carrboro, North Carolina

Mayor Mike Rawlings
Dallas, Texas

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Pam Hemminger
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mayor Dee Margo
El Paso, Texas

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mayor Steve Schewel
Durham, North Carolina

Mayor Sylvester Turner
Houston, Texas

Mayor Thomas 'Tom' Barrett
Milwaukee, Wisconsin