



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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September 7, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of The United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write on behalf of the Executive Committee of our bipartisan organization to express our concerns over your repeated attacks on cities and, more recently, your September 2, 2020 Memorandum to the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. This Memorandum has no legal standing and, if implemented, The United States Conference of Mayors will challenge it in court. We strongly urge you to immediately rescind the Memorandum and halt the process of attempting to defund critical city services.

Mr. President, attacks on America's cities are attacks on America itself. America's cities represent 86 percent of the Nation's population and 91 percent of real gross domestic product (GDP). The metro-city share of total employment in the U.S. increased to 88 percent in 2018, as metros added 2.1 million jobs, accounting for 94 percent of all job gains. America's cities are home to the highest share of personal income; the metro share of U.S. total personal income stands at 89 percent and wage income at 92 percent, although deep racial inequities in income and wealth present significant challenges that mayors are working every day to address. And, cities are the Nation's incubators of talent: people flock to cities to take advantage of their accessibility, diversity, inclusiveness, vibrancy, infrastructure and innovation.

This is a time when we all need to identify opportunities to come together as a Nation. America's mayors and the cities they lead are on the front lines combatting the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic downturn; and working to implement needed police reforms and help dismantle systemic racism. This is a time our Nation needs unity, not division, among all levels of government.

Therefore, we were deeply dismayed by the Memorandum and the intent to defund cities. We strongly believe that the Memorandum and any related effort to defund any city has no legal merit and will be quickly rejected by the courts. As you are aware, cities fought and are winning a similar battle with your Administration when the Department of Justice tried to deny public safety grants to certain cities. While we are prepared to take to the courts again if necessary, we strongly believe that the better course is to end this effort now and, instead, come together to seek common ground on a goal we can and should all agree is paramount: public safety.

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The number one priority for every mayor is public safety. Mayors have taken oaths to protect their cities, and will continue to do so, while at the same time protecting free speech. But if your Memorandum were to be implemented – slashing resources for police, firefighters, and other first responders along with a range of other essential services to residents – the result would be American cities that are much less safe. Indeed, the largest threat to public safety funding comes from the failure of the national government to provide all cities with emergency fiscal assistance as contained in the HEROES Act.

There are a number of ways in which the executive branch and the federal government are uniquely qualified to help cities. Many mayors have written to you and members of the executive branch asking for assistance in addressing critical needs. Those needs remain.

Mr. President, it is never too late for us all to work together. Our residents want leaders who collaborate to solve problems with thoughtful policies and investments.

Our organization was founded in 1932 in response to the need for a strong partnership and shared agenda between America's cities and the federal government. The United States Conference of Mayors – a nonpartisan organization of Democrats, Republicans and independents – calls upon you to support the federal-local partnership so important to the future of our Nation and to immediately rescind your Memorandum of September 2, 2020.

Sincerely,



Greg Fischer  
Mayor of Louisville  
President



Tom Cochran  
CEO and Executive Director