



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

February 6, 2024

Dear Senator:

I write on behalf of the nation's mayors to urge you to support the Bipartisan National Security Supplemental bill when it comes up for a vote. This bill provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make meaningful changes that will begin to fix our broken immigration system. This critically needed legislation will also help to stop the flow of fentanyl and other narcotics into our country, provide badly needed aid to our allies in Ukraine, Israel and Indochina, and deliver humanitarian aid for those in Gaza, the West Bank and other conflict zones. It would be tragic if partisan politics prevented this from happening.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors has long called on Congress to fix our broken immigration system. While we welcome migrants and asylum seekers to our cities, we need more help to provide them food, housing, services, and access to employment. America's cities are compassionate, but we cannot do it alone.

On Sunday Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said the bipartisan border package "begins with direct and immediate solutions to the crisis at our southern border." And he is right. This package is intended to reassert control of the border by delivering asylum protection determinations efficiently and fairly by ensuring that due process is respected, authorizing those with real protection claims to work sooner, and guaranteeing that the most vulnerable have access to legal representation. Specifically, it would create a new removal authority and move the asylum process out of the courts. It would end catch and release and close loopholes in parole. It would raise the asylum screening standard and streamline the initial asylum interview. It would establish a new border emergency authority that includes providing a new temporary expulsion authority to be used when border encounters exceed DHS capacity to quickly reassert control of the border when migrant numbers overwhelm the system.

Mayors are practical. They are about getting things done. Their residents expect that of them. And they see the negative impact of Congress's failure to pass any kind of immigration reform on a daily basis. Immigration courts face multi-year backlogs. Migrants are also waiting a long time for employment authorizations so they can work and support themselves and their families. Many employers cannot get the workers they need. Our border crossings are understaffed. City governments, non-profit agencies and religious organizations providing services to migrants are overwhelmed and cannot meet the need. The list goes on.

The time to start fixing these problems is now. You have a bipartisan compromise before you. The nation's mayors urge you to govern, to do what's best for the country and support the Bipartisan National Security Supplemental.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director