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July 22, 2013

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Reform of Federal Immigration Laws

Dear Senator Feinstein:

As Congress moves forward with reform of our immigration laws, I am writing on behalf of the League of California Cities (League) to urge your support for prompt action on this legislation in concert with the principles laid out below. Like the National League of Cities and many others across our nation, the board of directors of the League believes it should be an urgent priority of Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform. Every day city officials and staff are affected by the current dysfunction in our immigration system, and the need for action is critical. The League of California Cities supports the following federal Immigration Reform Principles with the highest priority attached to No. 2, with a particular focus on the urgency of eliminating illegal entry at the borders.

1. **Prompt Action Needed.** Congress should move quickly to enact comprehensive reform of the current immigration laws with support of the Administration to implement the immigration laws effectively.
2. **Consistent Federal Enforcement Required.** The federal government should enforce its current immigration laws consistently and vigorously to eliminate illegal entry at the borders, visa overstays, working without proper documentation, and employing undocumented workers.
3. **Increased Enforcement of Visa Laws Required.** The federal government must increase enforcement of visa overstays through the full implementation and staffing of the US-VISIT and SEVIS programs.
4. **Do Not Mandate Local Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws.** Local personnel, such as police officers, fire inspectors, educators, health personnel and social service personnel, should not be conscripted into federal service because the federal government has not adequately funded and staffed its immigration enforcement agencies; and the federal government must not transfer the responsibility of enforcing U.S. immigration laws to local personnel by making undocumented status in the U.S. a criminal offense.
5. **Increase Worksite Enforcement; Modernize Verification System.** The federal government must strengthen its worksite enforcement capacity and dramatically increase enforcement efforts at places of employment, as well as providing employers with a universal, reliable, effective, secure, non-discriminatory, and non-counterfeitable employee verification system, using the most up-to-date technology that will minimize fraud.

6. **Provide Efficient Process for Securing Visas and Legal Permanent Residency.** The federal government must increase its capacity and infrastructure to enforce the laws and provide efficient means for foreign nationals to obtain legal authorization for temporary visas or legal permanent residency.
7. **Improve Process for Temporary Workers, and to Become Legal Resident or Citizen.** The federal government must provide an appropriate, legal means of immigration, as is determined to be necessary and effective for the United States, for foreign nationals that want to work here temporarily, become legal permanent residents, or gain citizenship.
8. **Provide Path to Legal Status and Citizenship With Strict Conditions.** The federal government should establish a process whereby undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States may earn legalized status through payment of appropriate fees and back taxes, background checks, absence of criminal or gang activity, consistent work history, and meeting English and civics requirements; and that the immigrants who have earned such legal status should also be able to apply for citizenship through additional processes, as appropriate and practical, as long as they do not move ahead of applicants with proper documentation waiting to adjust their status or those waiting on lists in their home countries.
9. **Assist Local Governments Affected by New Immigrants.** The federal government should provide local governments with financial and technical assistance to alleviate the local impact of new immigrants, including the costs of providing social services, health care, education, language services, and civic integration.

Thank you for your attention to the concerns of California cities on this important matter. Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information. You can also contact the League's Washington advocate, Eve O'Toole, at (202) 419-2505. We look forward to continuing to work with you on California's important local priority issues.

Sincerely,



Chris McKenzie
Executive Director

c. National League of Cities