

DATE: October 23, 2013
TO: Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation
FROM: Illinois Municipal Leaders
RE: Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Dear Members of Congress,

Illinois is facing tough economic times. With an unemployment rate nearly two percent higher than the national average, we must do everything possible to get our economy moving again. As municipal leaders of nearly four million Illinois residents, we are on the front lines of this struggle every day. We often have to make tough choices due to a loss of tax revenue that still has not recovered to pre-recession levels.

We write to you today to support comprehensive immigration reform. We cannot hope to achieve the growth necessary to repair the damage done by the recession without bringing eleven million people out of the shadows and fully integrated into our economy. We also cannot stand by while our high-skill and low-skill visa programs operate so ineffectively, giving our businesses little assistance in finding the workers they need to grow.

Congressmen, we know that this action will accelerate growth because studies on the issue strongly support these conclusions. The Center for American Progress and the Immigration Policy Center show that the creation of a commonsense immigration process would lead to \$1.5 trillion in increased GDP over 10 years, contribute to the creation of as many as 900,000 jobs, and increase revenues by as much as \$5.4 billion. The Congressional Budget Office said that our deficit could be cut by more than \$20 billion dollars a year. Many of our cities and towns in Illinois would undoubtedly see increases in their revenue, thus easing the financial burden of providing crucial services to our constituents.

We need policies that are more responsive to the role that immigrants already play in our economy, regardless of how they came here. No immigration proposal can be truly comprehensive without having a realistic and fair plan for how to deal with the eleven million people who are already in our country and lack any legal status. By the same token, a secure border – a worthy goal that any bill must strengthen – will ensure that we won't find ourselves trying to tackle this problem again in ten or twenty years.

Illinois has historically sent leaders to Washington to get the toughest problems solved. From modern day champions like Dennis Hastert, Henry Hyde, Sid Yates, and Harold Washington, to the great names that swell our history books like Abraham Lincoln, Paul Douglas, Chuck Percy, Everett Dirksen, Adlai Stevenson, and Paul Simon, we know that you have it in you to fashion the legislation that will move our country forward.

Our country was careening towards default and leaders from both parties, in both chambers, came together to do the right thing. Let's take this opportunity to form another coalition to come together, heal our economy, and grant those – who followed in the footsteps of many of our own immigrant parents – a legal path to remain here and provide a better life for their children.

Sincerely,

Jim Ardis



Mayor, City of Peoria

Alex J. Bregen



President, Village of Fairmont City

Rodney S. Craig



President, Village of Hanover Park

Larry Dominick



President, Town of Cicero

Rahm Emanuel



Mayor, City of Chicago

Don Gerard



Mayor, City of Champaign

Tom Giarrante



Mayor, City of Joliet

David Kaptain



Mayor, City of Elgin

Chris Koos



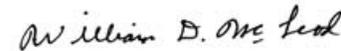
Mayor, City of Normal

Dan McLaughlin



Mayor, Village of Orland Park

William D. McLeod



Mayor, Village of Hoffman Estates

Barrett F. Pedersen



Mayor, Village of Franklin Park

Laurel Prussing



Mayor, City of Urbana

Tari Renner



Mayor, City of Bloomington

Nancy R. Rotering



Mayor, City of Highland Park

Angelo "Skip" Saviano



President, Village of Elmwood Park

Ron Serpico



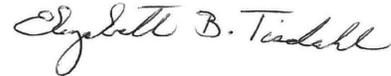
Mayor, Village of Melrose Park

cc

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin

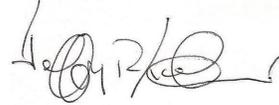
The Honorable Mark Kirk

Elizabeth Tisdal



Mayor, City of Evanston

Jeff Tobolski



Mayor, Village of McCook

Gerald Turry



Mayor, Village of Lincolnwood

Tom Weisner



Mayor, City of Aurora