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March 13, 2015

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
1404 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Congressman Gowdy:

Preventing crime and protecting the public are the top priorities of Chiefs and Sheriffs across the land. For this reason, we regret that the police departments from all major metropolitan areas in the Nation must oppose your bill, H.R. 1148, the "In Honor of Michael Davis, Jr., State and Local Law Enforcement Act". While we pay tribute to this fallen hero, we feel there are better ways to prevent such a tragedy.

Over the past decade, local criminal justice agencies have been forced to dedicate resources to immigration issues go beyond the scope of their jurisdiction. It is essential that the Federal Government provide the necessary resources to secure the border and enforce immigration laws, so that local jurisdictions may focus on policing their own communities. Immigration enforcement by local agencies would drain the limited resources required for higher priorities. Legislation to require immigration enforcement by local agencies erodes the trust that is essential for prevention of crime and protection of victims. We rely upon that trust for the cooperation needed to apprehend criminals like the killer of Deputy Sheriff Michael Davis.

Therefore, the Major Cities Chiefs recommend and support the following:

- Immigration enforcement laws or practices must be nationally based, consistent, and fully funded by the Federal Government. Immigration is a Federal policy issue between the United States Government and other countries, not a State or local responsibility.



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- Any initiative concerning the enforcement of immigration laws should not be at the detriment or reduction directly or indirectly of any current federal funding or programs focused on assisting local police agencies with local policing or homeland security activities.
- The priority is first acting to secure the national borders and prevent illegal entry into the United States. We support consideration of all possible solutions, including construction of border fences where appropriate, use of surveillance technologies, and increases in the number of border patrol agents. We further support adequate funding of Federal agencies responsible for border security and immigration enforcement so they can accomplish these goals.
- We fully support enforcement of immigration laws by the Federal government that prohibit employers from hiring illegal immigrants. Enforcement and prosecution of employers who illegally seek out and hire undocumented immigrants will help to eliminate one of the major incentives for illegal immigration. This will serve to reduce the exploitation of workers and the victims of human trafficking.
- We ask that Congress consult Major Cities Chiefs and other representatives of local law enforcement when developing any national initiative or practice that will impact local police agencies. We commend DHS for outreach and consultation in the development of new enforcement initiatives.
- We support the new DHS Priority Enforcement Program and the termination of the Secure Cities Program. We are committed to continued enforcement against criminal violators, regardless of immigration status. Individuals who commit criminal acts, regardless of their citizenship status should not find safe harbor from their criminal violations of the law within any major city.
- The inclusion of civil detainees in the N.C.I.C. system must be ended. It creates confusion for local police agencies and subjects them to liability for exceeding their authority by arresting a person solely on the basis of a civil detainer. Federal agencies should seek criminal warrants for anyone they have charged criminally with violations of immigration laws and submit those criminal warrants on the N.C.I.C. system.



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- We respectfully ask that Congress leave to local government the decisions related to how local law enforcement agencies allocate their resources, direct their workforce, and define the duties of their employees. The role of local police officers relating to immigration enforcement should be left to local government. Surely it is not good public policy to force an unwanted role upon police through the threat of sanctions or withholding of police assistance funding.

We urge you and your colleagues reconsider your direction and adopt a different path to the same goals. As the officials responsible for public safety in every major metropolitan area, we look to you for leadership and a bipartisan resolution to the ongoing debate over immigration enforcement.

We know that you share with us the same goals to prevent crime and protect the communities we are sworn serve.

Sincerely,

Chief J. Thomas Manger
Montgomery County Police Department
President
Major Cities Chiefs Association