

June 12, 2018

The Honorable Robert DeLeo, Speaker  
Massachusetts House of Representatives  
State House, Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker DeLeo,

I am writing to urge you to support the inclusion of Massachusetts State Senate Safe Communities amendments in the FY 2019 final Massachusetts state budget. We live in a deeply unsettling time for immigrants – documented and undocumented – who increasingly feel unwelcome and threatened by government actions by President Donald Trump.

I have deep respect for your leadership in developing and passing groundbreaking criminal justice reform legislation during this legislative session. The Safe Communities amendments are a natural extension of that effort to appropriately balance public safety with our values.

The Safe Communities Amendments will improve both the protection of immigrants and public safety in our cities and towns. Adoption of the Safe Communities amendments will reassure residents that our law enforcement officers will not act an extension of U.S. immigration officials in our communities. It will improve public safety by facilitating dialogue and outreach between residents and their local police. The amendments also protect immigrants detained by police by ensuring they understand their rights and have access to legal counsel prior to interactions with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In my hometown of Amherst, we have adopted the practices included in the Safe Communities amendments through the leadership of residents, municipal officials and our police department. These measures can effectively be implemented without sacrificing the ability of law enforcement officials to do their job. Our community will be greatly benefited by statewide adoption of these practices and protections, relieving immigrants of worry when traveling for work, healthcare or other reasons.

At a time when our national government is stepping up actions that separate families, effectively criminalize those seeking refuge and demonize our immigrants, I urge adoption of the Safe Communities amendments to protect our neighbors and send a clear message of our state's values.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Eric Nakajima  
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