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FAIR is a nonprofit public interest organization working to end illegal immigration and to set levels of legal immigration that are consistent with the national interest



FEDERATION FOR AMERICAN IMMIGRATION REFORM

Town of Jamestown
Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
93 Narragansett Avenue
Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835-1199

December 20, 2018

Dear Commissioners:

My name is Shari Rendall and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of concerned individuals who believe that our immigration laws must be reformed – and enforced – to better serve the needs of current and future generations.

For nearly 40 years, FAIR has been offering and advocating solutions that help reduce the harmful impact of illegal immigration on national security, public safety, jobs, education, health care, and our environment. Our support base includes over 1.9 million diverse members and supporters, including activists, social media followers, and donors. I write to express FAIR's strong opposition to the proposed Jamestown Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance.

Illegal immigration affects all facets of society, from the cost of education, to healthcare, to public benefits, to public safety and national security. Although the federal government is responsible for regulating immigration into the United States, local communities have a role to play to help ensure that immigration law is effectively enforced.

The Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance as proposed is bad public policy for the following reasons:

- The proposed ordinance endangers public safety. When state and local law enforcement or other officials fail to contact federal immigration authorities, criminal aliens are able to reenter communities and engage in further criminal activity at the expense and safety of citizens and legal immigrants. Even



the average illegal alien, who some claim is “otherwise law-abiding,” frequently violates numerous state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, those prohibiting identity theft, forgery, and driving without a license or insurance, putting real victims in harm’s way through their behavior.

- The proposed ordinance will ensure that Jamestown is a magnet for more illegal immigration. Accommodating those who violate our immigration laws encourages others to follow the same path and gives prospective immigrants little reason to pursue legal paths to immigration when they can side step the process and gain the same benefits. This increased illegal immigration results in higher costs of living, reduced job availability, lower wages, higher crime rates, fiscal hardship on hospitals and substandard quality of care for residents, burdens on public services, and a reduction on the overall quality of life. We estimate that in 2017, illegal immigrants and their children cost Rhode Island taxpayers in excess of \$272 million.
- The proposed ordinance conflicts with federal law. Recognizing the adoption of policies like the one proposed by Jamestown as a growing impediment to combating the wave of illegal aliens residing in the country, Congress adopted the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, barring state and local governments from prohibiting employees from providing, receiving, or sharing information on illegal aliens with federal government immigration officials.
- A policy like the Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance denies U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) critical assistance to enable it to accomplish its statutorily mandated mission to identify and ultimately remove illegal aliens.
- The Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance will undermine national security efforts and create an environment in which terrorists and individuals of national security concern can potentially go unnoticed and unimpeded. Several of the 9/11 terrorists were in the country illegally, and had direct contact with state and local police just days before the infamous attack. Had their illegal status been discovered, the plot to attack this nation might have been uncovered.

Conversely, policies that ensure local officials are able to maintain a stream of communication with the federal government best protect the interests of their people. Congress designed immigration law with assistance from state and local law enforcement in mind.

FAIR recognizes that the impetus behind the resolution before you comes from wanting to “foster trust” in the community. However, there is simply no documented evidence indicating that any illegal alien has ever been deported solely as a result of reporting a crime or volunteering information to the police. As a practical matter, when police are offered information about a crime, they do not inquire about the immigration status of the person volunteering it. Moreover, there are various anonymous “tip-lines” where illegal aliens can offer information that may be valuable to law enforcement officials. In addition, illegal aliens that provide helpful information to police may qualify for a “S,” “T,” “U” or “VAWA” nonimmigrant visa, which in turn allows them to apply for permanent legal status in the U.S. The bottom line is there is no empirical evidence of a so-called “chilling effect” from local law enforcement cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Accordingly, there is no reliable evidence that policies like the Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance have ever encouraged a single illegal alien to cooperate with law enforcement authorities. But there are numerous examples of law-abiding citizens who have become victims of crime in jurisdictions that have adopted similar policies. FAIR therefore strongly opposes the Municipal Immigrant Protection Ordinance and recommends that it not be adopted.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we may be of assistance in the future. I may be reached via email at srendall@fairus.org or by phone at 202-328-7004.

Sincerely,

Shari Rendall
Director of State and Local Engagement