

ICMA / IHN / NFBPA
JOINT RESOLUTION AND STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
CALLING FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM
Adopted June 2011 by the ICMA Executive Board

A TIME FOR ACTION

*[Excerpt from ICMA White Paper]
Immigration Reform: An Intergovernmental Imperative
October 2008*

Immigrants have made and continue to make important contributions to the economy and culture of individual communities and the United States as a whole. They contribute to the economy through their labor, their payment of taxes, their role as consumers, and their entrepreneurial endeavors. They have repeatedly demonstrated their patriotism through military service, most recently through service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Immigrants also challenge the institutions of government and society through their numbers and their diversity. There is every reason to expect that this will continue in the future regardless of the nation's immigration policy. The question is whether national policies will facilitate the orderly flow of immigrants into the country to meet the demands for workers and individuals' desires to have a better life for themselves and their families, or if policies will force businesses and individuals to operate outside the law. The United States has experienced the counterproductive social and economic effects of a crackdown on illegal immigrants in the absence of effective and efficient administration of the legal immigration system.

A balanced, nonpartisan approach to immigration that is grounded in empirical analysis and economic realities, rather than highly charged political rhetoric, is in the best interests of the nation.

WHEREAS, throughout the history of the United States, immigration has been a crucial component of our growth and success as a nation; and

WHEREAS, the failure of the federal government to secure the borders, track visa recipients in the interior, or enforce work site laws have allowed illegal immigration to grow; at an estimated number of 11-12 million, the number of residents living and working in the U.S. without legal authorization and proper documentation has grown to an all time high; and

WHEREAS, when immigrants are admitted through a well-regulated system, they can strengthen the United States through economic development opportunities, increasing America's scientific and cultural resources, enhancing our ties with other nations, fulfilling humanitarian commitments, and supporting family ties and family values that are necessary to build sound communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the International City/County Management Association issued a white paper on the topic of immigration entitled *Immigration Reform: An Intergovernmental Imperative*, in which the following four broad principles were articulated:

- **PRINCIPLE 1:** Immigration policy should be overhauled to reflect twenty-first century economic and social realities, and enforcement must be recognized as a necessary but not sufficient component of immigration policy.
- **PRINCIPLE 2:** The natural division of responsibilities places immigration control at the national level and immigrant integration at the local level.
- **PRINCIPLE 3:** Federal enforcement activities should consider the impact on communities and local governments and should generally promote human rights.

- **PRINCIPLE 4:** Resources should be distributed to help communities facilitate the integration of all members of the community, and

WHEREAS, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), together with its affiliates, The International Hispanic Network (IHN) and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), acknowledge that some local governments bear disproportionate fiscal, economic, and societal impacts due to illegal immigration; and that these impacts may be exacerbated by the fiscal challenges currently faced by state and Federal governments; and

WHEREAS, ICMA, IHN and NFBPA acknowledge the federal responsibility in the development and implementation of effective immigration rules; and,

WHEREAS, local government, being closest to the people, has a history and tradition of programs that welcome and engender trust among all residents in our communities regardless of race, ethnicity or immigration status such as community oriented policing; and,

WHEREAS, we believe that a coherent and effective immigration policy must be national in scope, and that individually crafted state or local laws will negatively impact the progress made by local governments who have been successful in integrating and building trust within our immigrant communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ICMA, IHN and NFBPA state as follows:

- 1) We oppose any legislation that could lead to violation of the civil liberties and human rights of individuals.
- 2) We continue our support of human and civil rights and policies that support and promote the human dignity of all people.
- 3) We recognize the legitimacy, value, and importance of the laws of the United States relating to immigration, and believe the Federal government should be the lead in the enforcement of those laws.
- 4) We believe that immigration laws that are widely different, state by state, will be ineffective and counterproductive.
- 5) We oppose any legislation that attempts to expand the role of local governments in the enforcement of immigration policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ICMA, IHN and NFBPA acknowledge our role in helping to educate and inform our members regarding the critical issues pertaining to the needs of immigration reform; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ICMA, IHN and NFBPA urge Congress to quickly move to enact comprehensive reform of the current immigration laws with support of the Administration to implement the immigration laws effectively.