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January 26, 2024

Dear Honorable Senator Bennet:

On behalf of the Metro Mayors Caucus, comprised of 38 communities representing 2.6 million Coloradans, I am writing to urgently request additional federal support to address the ongoing immigration crisis that is now entering its second year. We respectfully request funding and fast-tracked work permits for the migrants coming to Colorado.

The Crisis:

Since December 2022, the City and County of Denver has received nearly 38,000 migrants, primarily from Venezuela, with 4,500 of them – including 2,000 children – currently sheltered in nine facilities. Texas has sent nearly 300 charter buses directly to Denver since June 2023, including 144 in December 2023 alone. This does not just affect the City and County of Denver, but the entire Denver Metropolitan area, and likely many other parts of the state.

Denver estimates it has spent \$45 million since 2022 on this crisis and has only received \$909,000 of reimbursements from the federal government. There are two awards expected which total \$9.7 million, but even that won't come close to covering the \$180 million it will cost the city this year if the pace of new arrivals does not slow down.

The Solution:

While admittedly, there is not one solution to the influx of migrants into Colorado, there are policy solutions that will help integrate asylum seekers and refugees into the United States economy. Funding is an essential piece of the puzzle. Denver is looking at cutting critical services from their budget to make up for the millions of dollars being expended on the migrant influx. The federal government must assist affected cities across the United States to backfill the expenses that are used to shelter and feed the people coming through the borders.



Additionally, many Colorado employers are facing a workforce shortage. Fast-tracking work permits would help improve Colorado's economy and enable new migrants to become proud workers and residents of Colorado.

While Denver is currently bearing the brunt of this crisis in Colorado, the communities of the Metro Mayors Caucus are working to lend support and respectfully request your advocacy for federal funding, legal services, and fast-tracked work permits.

The Metro Mayors Caucus is a non-partisan organization of mayors who work closely together to solve problems for local governments in our region. We support Denver Mayor Mike Johnston and all communities impacted by the migrant crisis.

Sincerely,

Laura Weinberg
Mayor, Golden, Colorado
2024 Chair – Metro Mayors Caucus