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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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November 5, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Dear Congressional Leaders:

Over the past few months, certain groups and individuals have called for the abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. This letter is intended to provide information and support for ICE's continued operation, which facilitates and assists a wide-range of law enforcement efforts with state and local agencies. The breadth and depth of these efforts are critical to public safety, and we – the chief legal officers of our states – are grateful for ICE's high level of coordination and diligence in working with state and local governments. Today, we call on you to uphold ICE and defend its agents.

Our offices routinely work with the Department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) department within ICE which is responsible for investigating criminal trafficking and financial operations involving foreign actors. While HSI conducts investigations independently, it also regularly works in conjunction with state and local agencies to thwart criminal activity like human trafficking.

This year, HSI played an important role in the massively successful Operation Broken Heart, a joint-operation between all levels of government that led to the arrest of 2,300 suspected online child sex offenders. This is in addition to the thousands of child predators whom HSI has arrested since 2003 as part of its ongoing Operation Predator.

As you may know, ICE's role is not limited to large-scale operations. Earlier this year, ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations removed a convicted sex offender from a Greensboro, North Carolina, community who illegally reentered the country after being convicted of indecent

behavior with a child. A month later in the Raleigh area, its agents arrested an illegally-present foreign national previously convicted on two counts of sexual battery.

ICE's value to our communities is not limited to apprehending human traffickers and child predators or tracking sex offenders. While ICE has proven a crucial partner in protecting our most vulnerable exploited populations, it also uses its resources to help combat illicit drug and weapons trafficking.

Earlier this year in conjunction with the DEA and Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, HSI agents arrested eleven individuals in association with Operation Highlife. This action took down a drug trafficking ring responsible for distributing hundreds of pounds of drugs smuggled from Mexico. Its success was the result of the joint federal and state Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation.

HSI plays an integral part of OCDETF, which was also responsible for Operation Hardest Hit – a partnership with law enforcement agencies in New York, Virginia, and Georgia that dismantled one of the deadliest opioid trafficking rings in operation.

These efforts will undoubtedly save American lives while continuing to erode these criminal elements' powers and instrumentalities. This erosion is also evident through HSI's work against illicit firearms trafficking, which recently led to the removal of assault weapons, ammunition, and other accessories from the streets of Laredo, Texas – an area devastated by the activities of criminal cartels. This seizure represents a very small amount of the work ICE does to keep weapons out of criminal hands, as last fiscal year alone HSI special agents confiscated nearly 5,900 weapons and nearly 675,000 rounds of ammunition.

ICE provides critical support and conducts important law enforcement activities that preserve the safety of our communities. Its work not only identifies and removes criminal actors operating in this country, but also locates fugitives from foreign governments hiding among us. ICE's actions across the country have facilitated the dismantling of criminal enterprises that prey on our most vulnerable citizens. Abolition of ICE would debilitate our joint efforts to preserve the rule of law and protect our fellow citizens.

We ask you preserve ICE's existence and operations, which are necessary and fundamental to successful law enforcement throughout our country.

Sincerely,



Jeff Landry
Louisiana Attorney General



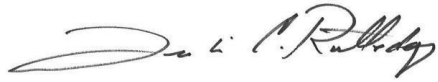
Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



Mark Brnovich
Arizona Attorney General



Josh Hawley
Missouri Attorney General



Leslie Rutledge
Arkansas Attorney General



Tim Fox
Montana Attorney General



Pamela Jo Bondi
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Wayne Stenehjem
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