



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

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**Deb Peters**  
*Senator – District 9*  
*South Dakota*  
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*Kentucky*  
*Staff Chair, NCSL*

**William T. Pound**  
*Executive Director*

February 14, 2018

Dear Senator:

As an organization representing the state legislatures of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, we recognize the challenges facing our country in matters relating to immigration. Federal immigration policy must strike a balance between the core principles of our democracy: preserving the safety and security of our nation; encouraging the economic strength of our states and communities; and recognizing our history as a nation of immigrants. As you move through the legislative process to craft immigration legislation, we urge your consideration and support of the following state government priorities:

- Securing all of America's borders, ports, and airports is essential to preserving our national security and maintaining the safety of all Americans. NCSL urges the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities regarding border security and encourages a renewed state-federal cooperation in countering human trafficking, weapons and drug smuggling. NCSL urges the federal government to increase its enforcement of these crimes.
- NCSL is strongly opposed to any efforts to shift enforcement of civil immigration law to state and local law enforcement agencies. State legislators believe that enforcement of federal civil immigration law is a federal responsibility and that state involvement in immigration enforcement activities should only be a state option. NCSL maintains that punitive measures such as cutting critical law enforcement and community development funding to states and localities is the wrong approach to solving our nation's immigration issues. This would create additional community relations and crime-solving hurdles for those whose responsibility it is to keep our communities safe and crime-free.
- NCSL supports full, federal funding for increases in Department of Homeland Security border enforcement personnel where they are most needed and necessary improvements in facilities, technology and infrastructure.
- NCSL maintains that federal enforcement activities at the worksite or in communities must be coordinated with state and local government. NCSL urges the federal government to be mindful that the states bear the primary responsibility for the children who are separated from their families because of federal enforcement activities. NCSL

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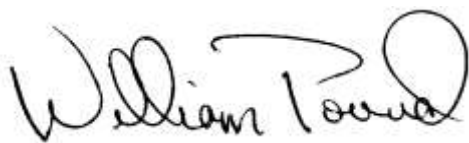
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supports federal coordination with child welfare and law enforcement agencies to guarantee that children are not endangered and that their best interests are protected.

- Immigration reform must address the fiscal impact on states. A critical component for NCSL support is state impact grants, a reliable, guaranteed funding source to ameliorate the costs states and localities bear in health, including public health, and education, including English language acquisition, to immigrant populations. State impact grants must require state legislative appropriation, providing needed flexibility and accountability.
- NCSL supports the promotion of citizenship as a national priority. NCSL strongly urges the federal government to assist the states in their efforts to promote naturalization and to address all barriers to naturalization.
- NCSL supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a temporary worker program and the creation of an earned legalization program for immigrants currently in the country without authorization. NCSL opposes amnesty. Earned legalization should include appropriate fines and penalties that are proportional to the violation.

During your legislative deliberations on immigration solutions, we urge you to consider these state priorities. States are willing to work with Congress to develop sound immigration policy that unites, not divides, our country. For additional information, please contact Susan Frederick ([susan.frederick@ncsl.org](mailto:susan.frederick@ncsl.org) / 202-624-3566) and Lucia Bragg ([lucia.bragg@ncsl.org](mailto:lucia.bragg@ncsl.org) / 202-624-3576).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Pound". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Pound  
Executive Director  
National Conference of State Legislatures