

September 17, 2020

The Honorable Chris Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Perdue
The United States Senate
455 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Lieu
U.S. House of Representatives
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Wilson
U.S. House of Representatives
1436 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murphy, Senator Perdue, Representative Lieu, and Representative Wilson:

As mayors proudly leading multicultural, innovative, and dynamic cities, we write to enthusiastically endorse the City and State Diplomacy Act (H.R. 3571/S.4426). This bill affirms the frontline role played by local governments in confronting the most pressing global challenges of our time and addresses the need for coordination with, and support from, our federal government on these critical issues.

Local governments forge and leverage international relationships daily to create equitable prosperity and opportunities for our residents, to support and celebrate our diaspora communities, and identify common ground and opportunities for cooperation to improve the quality of life in our cities.

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, cities from across the globe worked together to source PPE and test kits, share best practices, and develop programs to support our most vulnerable communities. Together, we are examining how to undertake a robust economic recovery that allows local leaders and residents to respond, rebuild, and reimagine our institutions as we guide our cities to a new normal.

This pandemic has exposed the critical need for international partnerships at all levels of government, and now is the time to ensure our State Department is resourced to support local efforts. This bipartisan legislation, which establishes an Office of Subnational Diplomacy at the State Department, would ensure coordinated and strategic subnational engagement with foreign governments.

As you know, U.S. cities and states have engaged in international diplomacy for decades, from leading trade missions to foreign countries to attract job-creating foreign direct investments (FDI) in our cities, to establishing webs of sister cities that knit our cultures closer together and advance our democratic values around the globe. These initiatives have come a long way, maturing into a deep and substantive engagement between U.S. local governments and foreign partners. U.S. cities lead in international networks, pioneer innovative international policy work, and interface directly with heads of state to exchange views on trade, sustainability, and human rights.

In today's global economy we are far behind our international counterparts—including China and other powerful economic countries—in securing the best human capital, resourcing, and coordination. This legislation will bring our local and federal efforts into better alignment during a time when international engagement is needed most.

We hope you will fully support this bipartisan bill and we stand ready to discuss this important topic in greater detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles, CA
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, City of Seattle, WA
Mayor Eric J. Mendenhall, City of Salt Lake City, UT
Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston, TX
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland, OR
Mayor Steve Adler, City of Austin, TX
Mayor Jeff Williams, City of Arlington, TX
Mayor Eric Johnson, City of Dallas, TX
Mayor Joe McElveen, City of Sumter, SC
Mayor Nan Whaley, City of Dayton, OH
Mayor Christine Hunschofsky, City of Parkland, FL
Mayor John Giles, City of Mesa, AZ
Mayor Joy Cooper, City of Hallandale Beach, FL
Mayor Eric Genrich, City of Green Bay, WI
Mayor Andy Berke, City of Chattanooga, TN
Mayor Ron Nirenberg, City of San Antonio, TX
Mayor McKinley Price, DDS, City of Newport News, VA
Mayor Bill Peduto, City of Pittsburgh, PA
Mayor Frank Scott, Jr., City of Little Rock, AR
Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz, City of Burnsville, MN
Mayor Dee Margo, City of El Paso, TX
Mayor Kirk Caldwell, City and County of Honolulu, HI

Mayor Denny Doyle, City of Beaverton, OR
Mayor Chris Calbadon, City of West Sacramento, CA
Mayor David Holt, City of Oklahoma City, CA
Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, City of Elizabeth, NJ
Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San Jose, CA
Mayor Michael B. Hancock, City and County of Denver, CO
Mayor Buddy Dyer, City of Orlando, FL
Mayor Joyce Craig, City of Manchester, NH
Mayor Yvonne M. Spicer, City of Framingham, MA
Mayor Darrell Steinberg, City of Sacramento, CA
Mayor Robert Garcia, City of Long Beach, CA
Mayor Martin J. Walsh, City of Boston, MA
Mayor Tim Keller, City of Albuquerque, NM
Mayor Ken Miyagishima, City of Las Cruces, NM
Mayor Lily Mei, City of Fremont, CA
Mayor Jane Castor, City of Tampa, FL
Mayor Libby Schaaf, City of Oakland, CA
Mayor Rusty Bailey, City of Riverside, CA
Mayor David Martin, City of Stamford, CT

CC:

The Honorable James Risch
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Bob Menendez
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Eliot Engel
Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
United States Secretary of State