



OFFICE OF MAYOR TED WHEELER
CITY OF PORTLAND

September 18, 2017

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Your September 19, 2007 Visit to Portland, Oregon

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

Welcome to Portland, Oregon. I hope your visit here brings attention to our city's strong economy, our vibrant culture, and our strong neighborhoods.

Portland is a thriving city because we have a population with diverse backgrounds who contribute positively to the fabric of our community. Our welcoming attitude towards all residents of our community is a core component of our identity, and a key to our success.

In Portland, we do not merely tolerate diversity, we celebrate it. Our local laws support these values, and we are better for it.

It is for these reasons that I strongly oppose the Trump administration's efforts to coerce local law enforcement agencies to enforce federal immigration laws, I strongly oppose the Trump administration's threats to punish those cities that do not, and I strongly oppose the Trump administration's attempts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA).

- On our sanctuary status, Oregon state law dating back to 1987 prohibits state and local police from enforcing federal immigration law. Further, the United States District Court for the District of Oregon ruled in 2014 that neighboring Clackamas County had violated a woman's constitutional rights by holding her at the request of immigrations officials. Other federal courts have reached similar results.
- On our eligibility for federal funds, Portland joined our neighbors in Seattle in a lawsuit challenging President Trump's executive order that threatened to withhold federal funding from sanctuary cities. Indeed, just last week, a judge from the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois ruled that the Department of Justice cannot withhold funds from cities based on their sanctuary status. This is a welcome decision, and squares with Portland's understanding of the law.



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- Finally, on DACA, I am hopeful that this program will be continued and made permanent. Dreamers were brought to the United States as children, through no decision of their own. This is the only country they have ever called home. Dreamers today are applying their talents to make a positive difference in our society. We should embrace Dreamers, not reject them.

I would like to address another issue before closing: the DOJ Settlement Agreement with the Portland Police Bureau. Over the past five years, our Police Bureau has made tremendous strides to improve interactions with people experiencing mental health issues. The Portland Police Bureau has become a resource for law enforcement agencies across the country who want to learn how to make improvements in their own organizations on issues related to mental health.

Some are concerned that the Department of Justice, under your leadership, will seek to bring a premature end to the Settlement Agreement. We ask that you allow DOJ attorneys to continue to work with our city attorneys and the Portland Police Bureau to satisfy the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

Sincerely,

Ted Wheeler
Mayor, City of Portland