

NEW HAMPSHIRE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS NETWORK
NEW HAMPSHIRE IMMIGRANT SOLIDARITY NETWORK

Via Email to <https://ayottetransition.com/contact/>

OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR-ELECT KELLY AYOTTE

December 18, 2024

Governor-Elect Kelly Ayotte
P.O. Box 4723
Manchester, NH 03108

Re: Commitment to Governing New Hampshire on Behalf of ALL New Hampshire Residents

Dear Governor-Elect Ayotte:

We are submitting this letter on behalf of the NH Immigrant Rights Network and the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network. We are coalitions of New Hampshire organizations and individuals working with and within immigrant communities to improve lives and ensure just treatment. We are writing to ask you to commit to being the Governor for **all** New Hampshire residents.

We are prompted to communicate with you based on remarks you made during a December 13, 2024 interview with WMUR's Adam Sexton referencing your position on New Hampshire's potential involvement with President-Elect Trump's cruel threats to embark on mass deportations. During that interview you indicated that you will "support efforts to conduct a mass deportation of undocumented immigrants."¹

We are deeply opposed to New Hampshire involving state and local law enforcement officers in any enforcement of federal immigration law violations which are largely civil in nature. There is no need for New Hampshire law enforcement entities to step outside of their primary obligations to protect the people of New Hampshire, regardless of citizenship status. There is most certainly

¹ *Ayotte Says New Hampshire Would be Ready to Support Mass Deportation of Undocumented Immigrants*, WMUR, Dec. 13, 2024 at <https://www.wmur.com/article/new-hampshire-kelly-ayotte-mass-deportation/63188270>.

no “good government” rationale for engaging in law enforcement operations designed to harm New Hampshire families.

Over the past many years, members of our groups have worked diligently to connect with New Hampshire’s law enforcement community and we have forged strong connections with local departments as well as the Department of Safety. As a result, those departments have developed tools and mechanisms to better connect with and serve immigrant communities. One of the outcomes was the Department of Safety’s Fair and Impartial Policing Policy which has been incorporated into the Attorney General’s Law Enforcement Manual and the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council’s training materials. New Hampshire law enforcement involvement with immigration law enforcement would erode the strides that our state has made to encourage immigrant community trust in law enforcement.

The incoming President’s threats to engage in mass deportations is an inhumane response to a federal problem caused by the U.S. Congress’s decades-long failure to fix the immigration system. Historically, mass deportation efforts in our country have been rooted in racial, ethnic and religious animus and this current threat will disproportionately focus on people of color.²

We expect that as Governor you will focus your efforts on protecting all New Hampshire residents from federal government overreach. The vast majority of our population are U.S. citizens or lawfully present residents; others have struggled for years to put their status in order while Congress has failed them.³ Our state has little need for aggressive federal law immigration enforcement initiatives, much less state and local law enforcement entanglement in such efforts. If mass deportation operations take place in New Hampshire, there is a strong likelihood that lawfully present New Hampshire residents and U.S. citizens, and longtime community

² Mel Wilson, *Near Certain Cataclysmic Consequences of a Mass Deportation System*, National Association of Social Workers (Fall 2024) at <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Social-Justice/Social-Justice-Briefs/Near-Certain-Cataclysmic-Consequences-of-a-Mass-Deportation-Program#:~:text=However%2C%20it%20was%20in%20the%201880s%20when,Chinese%20laborers%20immigrating%20to%20the%20United%20States>.

³ 2.9% of the New Hampshire population is foreign-born (which includes people who are now U.S. citizens) and undocumented immigrants account for .07% of the New Hampshire population. American Immigration Council (2024) at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/new-hampshire/#:~:text=New%20Hampshire%20has%20a%20small,at%20least%20one%20immigrant%20parent>.

members will be wrongfully detained and even removed from the country.⁴ And most tragically, New Hampshire children will be irreparably harmed.

For these reasons, we ask that you put the interests and well-being of all New Hampshire residents first and decline to participate in any federal mass deportation efforts.

We would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you or members of your staff to further discuss this very concerning federal initiative.

Sincerely,

⁴ *US Citizens Caught in Dragnet as Immigration Enforcement Gets More Aggressive*, Immigration Impact (Aug. 1, 2019) at <https://immigrationimpact.com/2019/08/01/us-citizens-detained-by-ice/>.