

Dear Congressmember,

Among my colleagues and I, we continue to hear concerns daily about the Northwest Detention Center. Through reports from citizens and community leaders, and our own firsthand tours, we are knowledgeable of the breaches of health, safety, civil rights and human dignity in the detention center. The immigration incarceration system endangers 38,153 men, women and children every single day – 1,575 adults at this center in our city. As long as this facility is in our city, we will seek every means possible to ensure the rights, dignity, health and safety of the detainees are protected. We can do better for these 1,575 individuals who have been brought into our community. We call on you to be partner with us in making that commitment.

The City of Tacoma may have limited regulatory authority over this facility, but that does not render us impotent from helping to design and mobilize strategies with others who have authority. As members of Congress, you have authority. We applaud the leadership of Representatives Adam Smith (WA-9) and Pramila Jayapal (WA-7) in introducing in the last Congress the *Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act*. We urge and support re-introduction of legislation such as this that proposed critical reforms to the detention system such as eliminating the profit motive to detain people; restoring due process to custody decisions; increasing oversight, accountability, and transparency; and establishing real alternatives to detention.

Ours is not the only city that has called on Congress to reform the nation's broken immigration system. Time and time again the nation's mayors have come together to declare the calculable value of immigrants to their communities.

We respect that reforming the immigration system is no quick or easy task, but that does not excuse us to simply observe detention practices that continue compromise health, safety, civil rights and dignity. We hear the enormous public concern for ensuring the humane treatment of detainees. We think it important that local independent oversight of this facility be established to increase transparency and credibility with respect to verifying the treatment of detainees.

We will continue to work with our entire Congressional delegation to look for a suite of options to address the practices by which individuals are detained when brought into our community. The treatment of immigrants and those seeking asylum or other sanctuary in our country is one of the critical issues of our time. We are committed to ensuring fair and just practices that respect the dignity of every immigrant and refugee that seeks shelter within our borders.

Sincerely

Mayor

Councilmember(s)

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