

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

We write to express strong support for fulfilling the request of interior city Mayors, including the Honorable Brandon Johnson, Mayor of the City of Chicago, to appropriate \$5 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Shelter and Services Program (SSP).

Though this request is \$3.6 billion above President Biden's national security supplemental requested amount of \$1.4 billion, the amounts are necessary to address the scope of the challenges that interior cities, such as Chicago, Boston, New York and Denver, are facing. These cities are investing significant local resources to care for migrants in a safe and humane manner—despite the unacceptable lack of communication and coordination by politicians like Texas Governor Greg Abbott, who is seeking to cynically use vulnerable migrants, including families and children, as partisan pawns to demonize asylum seekers and sow chaos.

Properly managing migration involves supporting both responsible border localities and the interior States that provide essential assistance to decompress the border by receiving, processing and integrating recent arrivals. Any funding provided to border States and localities should be conditioned on coordination with interior communities receiving migrants from the border, and such a commonsense approach requires investing at least \$5 billion in FEMA's SSP to ensure interior States and localities receive an adequate proportion of SSP funds. In addition to adequate funding for FEMA SSP, interior cities must be allowed to use such funds to support migrants for at least six months after their release from U.S. Department of Homeland Security custody. This reasonable and necessary flexibility would enable responsible public servants in our Nation's interior to continue safely and humanely welcoming and processing vulnerable migrant families.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator