

For Immediate Release:

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Diverse Chorus Applauds as Mayor Bloomberg Signs Two Bills Limiting NYC's Participation in Widely Discredited Immigration Enforcement Programs

Intros 982 and 989, sponsored by Speaker Christine Quinn and Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito, respectively, will limit numbers of undocumented immigrants held through the widely discredited 'Secure Communities' Program

New York – A broad coalition voiced its support of legislation that Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed into law today that will further limit NYC's collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the widely discredited program "Secure Communities," which has been actively operating in New York City since May 2012. Secure Communities, which has caused substantial opposition across the country, connects local authorities like the NYPD to ICE databases and allows immigration to request that the police hold immigrants who they suspect of being deportable. The legislation (Intros 982 and 989) will prevent the NYPD and the Department of Corrections from holding and handing over certain categories of individuals, including those who have no criminal records, and a few categories of those with prior convictions for minor offenses. The proposals are a very positive step and build off of initial legislation passed in 2011 limiting the city's collaboration with ICE in the Department of Corrections.

Javier Valdes, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York, said, "By signing this bill into law New York once again takes a step to protect immigrant families. As we continue to fight for family unity and immigration reform, we are proud that our city leads the way towards a system and country we want."

"We applaud Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn and the New York City Council for enacting this important piece of legislation signaling that New York City will not stand for laws or regulations that harass immigrants and turn police officers into de facto immigration agents," said **Hector Figueroa, president of 32BJ SEIU**.

"Immigration reform is not simply a social justice issue, but a workers' issue. Now, Congress must enact a complete package of common sense immigration reforms to protect the 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country and allow them to come out of the shadows and earn a good living so they and their families can become part of the middle class."

“The bills signed today are New York City’s call to the rest of the country, as national attention focuses on the possibility of comprehensive immigration reform,” said **Nisha Agarwal, Deputy Director of the Center for Popular Democracy.**

“By limiting the impact of Secure Communities and punitive federal immigration enforcement policies, this legislation makes clear that we must—as a city and a country—choose a path forward on immigration that protects our families, sustains our communities and promotes the hard work and opportunity that boosts our economy.”

“This legislation will allow thousands of New Yorkers to return home to their families and will improve public safety by demonstrating that New York City is not an extension of the federal government’s inhumane deportation system,” said **Lindsay Nash, Liman Fellow at the Immigrant Justice Clinic of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.**

“As public defenders, we at Brooklyn Defender Services witness on a daily basis the devastating impact S-Comm has on our local communities,” said **Lisa Schreibersdorf, Executive Director of Brooklyn Defender Services.** “Today, New York City has demonstrated critical and very welcome leadership with this new law. We applaud our city’s leadership on this issue, and look forward to the protections this law will afford to immigrant New Yorkers and their families.”

“By exempting individuals with prior arrests or convictions for Prostitution and Loitering for the Purposes of Prostitution, this bill will protect many sex workers, human trafficking survivors, and immigrants who are at risk of profiling, such as transgender women. We applaud the City Council and Mayor for seeking to protect these individuals from the danger of deportation,” said **Lynly Egyes, staff attorney at the Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center.**

“We commend Mayor Bloomberg for signing this S-Comm legislation,” said **Diane Steinman, Director of the Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform.** “In doing so, the Mayor has acted with justice and compassion, and made a clear moral statement to our state and nation: immigrants who are good neighbors and contributing members of our communities deserve to remain among us, free from fear of deportation that shatters immigrant lives and families.”