

September 8, 2025

**Ambassador Jürg Lauber**

President of the UN Human Rights Council

Office of the President

Palais des Nations, Room E-3057

United Nations Office in Geneva

via email: [hrcpresidency@un.org](mailto:hrcpresidency@un.org)

cc: [ohchr-hrcouncil@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcouncil@un.org); [ohchr-hrcngo@un.org](mailto:ohchr-hrcngo@un.org)

**Re: Addressing Non-cooperation of the US federal government in the UPR**

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned state legislators and local elected officials dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights, wish to express our deep concern over the United States federal government's official withdrawal from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, an unprecedented step that signals a worrying retreat from our human rights obligations. While we understand that UN General Assembly resolution 60/251 establishing the UPR process commits the Council to undertaking a review "with the full involvement of the country concerned," given the U.S. disengagement from the Human Rights Council and its flippant disregard for its main pillars - Special Procedures and the UPR process - we respectfully request that the Council complete this crucial peer-to-peer assessment of the U.S.' human rights record regardless of whether the U.S. federal government participates in the process.

As duly elected representatives of the millions of people in the United States, we stand ready—guided by a commitment to international cooperation—to appear before this Council and engage in a substantive and constructive dialogue with fellow member states regarding the United States' human rights record. In doing so, we seek to strengthen our adherence to international human rights obligations and reaffirm our dedication to contributing responsibly and meaningfully to the protection of human rights at the state and local levels.

We also recognize that the responsibility to uphold and implement the United Nations' human rights recommendations does not rest solely with the federal government. As state and local officials, we hold the authority, capacity, and duty to advance these principles within our jurisdictions. We are committed to doing our part to ensure that human rights are protected and promoted in communities across the United States, and to working in partnership with global institutions toward a more just and equitable world.

As state and local elected officials, we recognize and commend the substantial efforts of human rights advocates, community-based organizations, and civil society actors across the United States who submitted 155 stakeholder reports to inform the UPR process. These contributions reflect a profound and ongoing commitment to ensuring that the United States moves toward greater alignment with international human rights standards. The reports draw international

attention to the administration's failure to protect the rights of Indigenous communities; the mass and illegal detention and deportation scheme that suspends the human rights of migrants; the systemic injustices of the criminal legal system, including the practice of forced prison labor and extreme sentences such as death by incarceration; water injustices as a manifestation of environmental racism; the expansion of the "terrorism" framework and vast surveillance infrastructure used to repress expression; U.S. complicity in advancing violations of domestic and international law in Gaza by exporting arms to Israel; the regression on reproductive rights and bodily autonomy; and the criminalization of homelessness and poverty. These contributions reflect both the genuine commitment of the people and communities across the United States to advancing human rights and the deep concern expressed by communities across our country, particularly those marginalized by U.S. policies.

As elected representatives at the state and local levels, we are committed to addressing these violations within our jurisdictions. We view the UPR process not only as a moment of global accountability, but also as an opportunity to deepen our responsibility to advance human rights for all people living in the United States. We cannot, in good conscience, remain silent in the face of the federal government's blatant disregard for basic human rights and willful attack on standards and principles of international law. We therefore welcome the opportunity to engage with our global partners and to reaffirm—publicly and unequivocally—our commitment to upholding universal principles of human dignity. We further reaffirm the fundamental responsibility of government at all levels to ensure the protection and fulfillment of the human rights of all people within our borders.

Sincerely,

Representative Esther Agbaje, *Minnesota*

Representative Jose Alvarez, *Florida*

Councilor Shawna Ambrose, *Colorado*

Representative Marianna Anaya, *New Mexico*

Senator Nickie J. Antonio, *Ohio*

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