Dear Governor\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Blessings on your ministry for the people of your State and your work within the National Governors Association (NGA) on behalf of citizens across the United States.

**We are writing you to request two action items in preparation for the upcoming Summer 2023 NGA Meeting.**

Recently, the news carried the story of Governors sending busloads of asylum seekers unannounced to “sanctuary” cities in different states of the United States. In the early reporting, it was bemoaned that there was not a coordinated effort on the part of the Governors to come up with a plan to welcome asylum seekers who come with a desire to work, contribute their skills to enrich the U.S. economy, and do their part to attain a better way of life for themselves and their families. Since those events many more busloads of immigrants have been bused to different cities.

**Action Request:** **We ask that you advocate for** **a session on the 2023 Summer NGA Meeting Agenda focused on ways to coordinate among the states the welcoming of asylum seekers. Please do not make the plight of these persons a political issue. We urge you to demonstrate leadership in changing the narrative about asylum seekers and encourage you to invite the citizens of your state to witness to inclusive and welcoming communities.**

Unfortunately, some news media reported that asylum seekers were illegally in the United States. Misinformation adds to the confusion about the situation at the US-Mexico border which is complicated for those desiring to enter the US. It is a fact that US law recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum. The absence of a functioning government, war, roaming bands of violent gangs who terrorize citizens, extortion and death threats are forcing many to flee their countries.

Generally, those seeking asylum are processed by the Border Patrol / Immigration. When they are released, Immigration gives them documents with the name, address and phone number of their sponsors, which they provided to Immigration. Immigration arranges a court date in a city near the sponsor where their hearing to request asylum will take place. It is the responsibility of the asylum seeker / sponsor to pay the travel expenses to this destination. Sending busloads of asylum seekers to sanctuary cities that are far from where their sponsors are is no solution.

Seeking asylum is a costly and long process that involves paying a lawyer. During this time, they are not allowed to work legally.

**Action Request: We ask that you advocate for the passage of Senate Bill 3665, *Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act of 2022*, allowing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide employment authorization to eligible asylum applicants during the period necessary to adjudicate their asylum claim. We further request that you seek public endorsement for S. 3665 by NGA members as a body at the 2023 Summer NGA Meeting.**

It is the responsibility of the US to help resettle those fleeing violence, death and incredible hardship. We thank you for your attention to our requested actions and look forward to receiving feedback on actions taken.

Respectfully submitted,