

**CITY OF LONG BEACH  
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

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February 8, 2018

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
City of Long Beach  
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 14th Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Letter of Support of the Long Beach Values Act

Honorable Mayor Garcia, Members of Long Beach City Council, and City Manager Pat West:

The Human Relations Commission strongly expresses support for protecting all undocumented immigrants, refugees, and DREAMERs. We as a commission have witnessed heartbreaking testimonies of our very own undocumented community members who live in fear. With over 26% of our citizens being foreign born, all undocumented immigrants and refugees are part of our community. Neither nationality nor citizenship define a community, and it should not be used to divide us.

Nak Kim Chhouen, 42, is a Long Beach resident that has been held in federal custody since reporting to a meeting with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Oct. 20. Although Immigration officials said Chhouen was ordered deported in 2001 after a criminal conviction in 1999, he was allowed to remain in the U.S. on supervised release, which allowed him to live and work here legally so long as he checked in.

Dario Guerrero, alumni of the California Academy of Mathematics and Science and now Harvard Graduate who had lost his DACA status in 2014 when he took his dying mother to Mexico for treatment. Even with the support of Harvard's lawyers, the offices of Representative Michael Capuano and Senator Dick Durbin, and others, Dario's initial request to return was denied. It was not until he agreed to let the Associated Press tell his story. Hours after it appeared, he was granted humanitarian parole. He applied to get his DACA status reinstated and a new work visa, and was able to return to the US and to school.

With stories like these, it is crucial to state Long Beach stands with our immigrant neighbors and to draw a clear line between the roles of the federal immigration enforcement agency and our local agencies. This is about our values as the City of Long Beach. When our immigrant neighbors are in danger of being deported, we should stand by them, instead of having policies that help split up families and drive immigrants underground.

We are confident that the Long Beach Values Act will strengthen our city. This policy does not create special rights for anybody. It does not give undocumented immigrants any rights that others don't have. It says that we must treat everyone the same, regardless of immigration status. Research shows that sanctuary cities have lower crime rates and stronger economies than comparable non-sanctuary cities. In 2015, the typical sanctuary county in a large metropolitan area experienced 654 fewer crimes per 100,000 residents than the typical non-sanctuary county in a big, metropolitan area. That's an overall crime rate approximately 15 percent lower. Such policies can build trust between immigrant communities and the local police. The current administration has implemented a series of actions based on xenophobia, racism, and prejudice, and with such a polarizing and divisive issue it is important that as a community we create and continue to develop strong and clear lines of communication between law enforcement and citizens.

If we as a city want to send the message that inclusiveness is one of the core values we build our community on, then we cannot turn our backs on our immigrant communities. Vote yes on the Long Beach Values Act.

The purpose and function of the Human Relations Commission is to “promote full acceptance of all citizens in the community in all aspects of community life, to recommend to city council measures, including legislation, which will serve to improve positive human relations and the elimination of discriminatory practices, and to enhance and improve mutual understanding and respect for all citizens of the community.” It is in this context that the Human Relations Commission submits this recommendation with a hope and vision of Long Beach where our city continues to embrace values of justice, equity, respect and dignity for all its residents.

Respectfully,

Amy Eriksen, Chair

Human Relations Commission