

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

January 17, 2024

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write to express my concern and request immediate assistance for cities and towns across the State of Wisconsin as migration increases demands on existing state and local government resources.

I support the ongoing bipartisan negotiations on legislation that will help fix our broken immigration system, secure our border, and provide the resources the Administration has requested for critical border enforcement activities, communities receiving migrants, and to stem the flow of fentanyl across the border. The United States and the Western hemisphere are experiencing an unprecedented period of migration, straining our infrastructure and our national, state, and local governments' ability to respond. The impact of this migration is not contained to communities at our Southwestern border. Addressing this crisis requires leadership, and as part of your Administration's response, I urge you to ensure that adequate resources and support are available to towns and cities across Wisconsin to keep our communities healthy and safe for all.

I want to ensure your attention to a request you recently received from the City of Whitewater, Wisconsin.¹ Whitewater estimates that between 800-1,000 migrants have arrived since 2022, a population increase of approximately 7 percent.² The city reports that it lacks the resources to provide the types of communication, transportation, housing, and public safety services that are necessary to best serve its community. I am working to connect the city to existing resources that may offset these costs. However, it is clear that more must be done to provide the resources necessary to respond to this period of unprecedented migration and its effects at our Southwest border and across the United States.

That is why am fighting to secure the key investments that will help cities and recently arrived migrants as they integrate in local communities included in the Administration's national

¹ Letter from Chief Meyer, et. al., at: <https://www.wpr.org/documents/letter-president-biden-pdf>.

² S. Lehr, Whitewater Police Chief Preparing Letter Asking for Federal Help in Response to Migration, at: <https://www.wpr.org/whitewater-police-chief-letter-asking-federal-help-immigration>; Council approves letter to President Joe Biden describing immigration-related challenges facing local law enforcement, at: <https://whitewaterwise.com/council-approves-letter-to-president-joe-biden-describing-immigration-related-challenges-facing-local-law-enforcement/>.

security supplemental appropriations request. These investments would include an additional \$1.4 billion in Shelter and Services Program (SSP) grants to local governments to provide food, shelter, and other services to recently arrived migrants; 30 new USCIS officers to speed issuance of work authorization for eligible noncitizens; 375 additional immigration judge teams to adjudicate and process immigration cases; and an additional 1,600 asylum officers and other staff to hear migrant claims and facilitate timely dispositions.

Wisconsin communities must be eligible to apply for this funding. Following appropriation of additional SSP funding, I urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency to broaden the eligibility for this funding beyond those cities and nonprofits that previously received it to ensure that Wisconsin communities, like Whitewater, can benefit from these resources. I additionally urge the Administration to work across agencies to provide technical assistance to communities – small and large – as they work to meet the needs of migrants. This technical assistance is particularly necessary for smaller communities who may lack the resources and capacity of larger municipalities, or who are implementing support services for migrant populations for the first time.

Wisconsin is home to nearly 300,000 immigrant residents, originating from countries across the globe. Wisconsin communities need appropriate resources to provide services to help all Wisconsinites stay safe and thrive. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

CC: Deanne Criswell, FEMA Administrator