



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

January 14, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, we write to congratulate you on your inauguration as Governor and to request your immediate assistance with the influx of asylum-seeking families being released into San Diego.

The U.S.-Mexico border has seen a surge in Central American migrants seeking asylum from humanitarian abuse, often stemming from gang recruitment and violence. A majority of these asylum seekers are families, many who have traveled long distances with small children. After the federal government ended the Safe Release Program in October 2018, which ensured travel accommodations and connections to family members were made prior to releasing individuals from custody, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency began releasing asylum-seeking families into downtown San Diego without aid.

The San Diego Rapid Response Network, comprised of more than two dozen non-profit organizations (NGOs), has established a temporary shelter to ensure families have access to food, medical care, legal services and assistance with travel arrangements to their final destination. Despite trying to better coordinate drop-offs with ICE, the current shelter has at times been over capacity, creating an urgent need to identify additional locations for the State or other capable entities to continue providing temporary shelter.

Two years ago, the State opened and staffed two of the several National Guard Armories in the San Diego region to serve as a temporary shelter for Haitian immigrants who were similarly dropped off by the federal government. Today, we are writing to request the State to temporarily shelter these Central American immigrants in those same locations as they continue to be released locally over the coming weeks and months. Also, by direction from the Board of Supervisors, the County is also in the process of identifying County property for a potential temporary shelter that the State or a NGO could use to temporarily shelter asylum-seeking families.

We were pleased to see your pledge of State funding in your Proposed FY 2019-2020 State Budget to assist community-based organizations currently providing services and for ongoing immigration-related services. This funding for the NGOs will provide welcome relief as these organizations have been primarily relying on private donations to continue serving this population at an increased level.

The County has been assisting NGOs that have been working to address asylum seekers' immediate needs for temporary shelter, as well as providing nursing staff and contract medical services to administer vaccines, complete health screenings and refer individuals for outside medical care, as necessary.

Since the County has been dedicating resources to aid this population, despite immigration regulations not being under local authority, we hope public agencies in the San Diego region that are also impacted by this crisis will be eligible to receive reimbursement for both our current and ongoing efforts to assist asylum-seeking individuals.

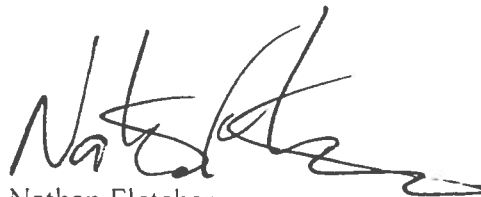
Additionally, this past week, at our request, the Board of Supervisors voted to establish a regional working group made up of federal, State, County and local stakeholders to address both short- and long-term solutions for the migrant crisis in San Diego County. We intend to work swiftly and collaboratively to improve communications amongst agencies, identify solutions and create substantive actions and recommendations for both the region and State; our goal is to not only help the region being impacted by the increase of asylum-seeking migrants, but also to provide the assistance these families need to fully embrace the opportunities of the better life they are seeking in the United States.

As you begin your term as Governor, the County of San Diego stands ready to work with you on this matter and others that may arise during your time leading the State of California.

Sincerely,



Greg Cox
Supervisor, First District
County of San Diego



Nathan Fletcher
Supervisor, Fourth District
County of San Diego