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Rep. McCollum Statement on Oversight Hearing with Sanctuary State Governors

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Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Lynch,

I want to start by recognizing Governor Walz, my former colleague here in the House, who just successfully negotiated a budget agreement with the tied Minnesota Legislature to avoid a state-level government shutdown. It was a pleasure to work with him when he served here in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I thank him for his leadership as Minnesota's governor. I am grateful for his stewardship on behalf of all those who call the North Star State home.

Mr. Chairman, on immigration the Trump Administration is creating a crisis of chaos – escalating tensions across the nation with a reckless policy of mass deportations, violations of due process, and divisive efforts to demonize immigrants and turn our backs on vulnerable refugees. In Los Angeles the administration is deploying the National Guard and active-duty Marines at the cost of at least \$134 million. Now as the committee has called the Democratic governors of three states to testify about so-called “sanctuary jurisdictions,” it is clear the administration and House Republicans are working in lockstep on their strategy to attack states that are governed by Democrats. This is despite the evidence that, in my home state of Minnesota, crime is declining, companies are hiring, and employees are finding good-paying jobs. We continue to be ranked as one of the best states to raise a family.

Governor Walz understands that Minnesota is a state that welcomes immigrants. We respect and value our immigrant neighbors. After the Vietnam War, Hmong and Lao war veterans who fought alongside American forces during the secret war in Laos were welcomed into our communities. In the 1990s during the Somali Civil War, Minnesota again provided a safe, new home for families displaced by violence. These and other immigrants have made many contributions that make our communities and our nation a better place.

Minnesotans also value our local law enforcement, and community-based policing is a cornerstone of this relationship. During my service in Congress, I have consistently worked to support local law enforcement, including securing millions of dollars in Community Project Funding grants for my public safety agencies. These community projects reflect what Minnesotans want for and from our local law

enforcement: partnership, transparency, accountability, and responsible policing. I know this has been a priority for Governor Walz since his service in Congress. As Governor of Minnesota he has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in state and local law enforcement.

When it comes to federal immigration laws, Minnesota does not prohibit state officials from complying with DHS requests, nor does it prohibit information sharing with ICE. By classifying the Minnesota as a “sanctuary,” the administration betrays how sloppy their own definition is.

This became matter of embarrassment for the White House when DHS was forced to quickly pull back a list of “sanctuary jurisdictions” they released earlier this month, which included several Minnesota counties that actively contract with ICE to detain undocumented immigrants.

This hearing takes place at a time when the administration is forging ahead by making arrests that violate the due process rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The administration must read the Constitution and follow the law, especially when they have been found in violation of the law by the courts.

If the administration and House Republicans were serious about addressing our broken immigration system that is crying out for reform, they should be working on comprehensive reform that upholds America’s values and keeps our country safe. We do that by securing our borders and establishing a process for qualifying immigrants to earn legal status. We should welcome admission of fully vetted refugees.

Instead, Republicans continue to use immigration and Democratic states who follow federal immigration law, as scapegoats to win votes. I am ready to get to work fixing our broken immigration system. It’s time for Republicans to come to the table. Thank you again Governor Walz, and Governors Pritzker and Hochul, for being here to stand up for your constituents and American values

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