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**MAYOR EMANUEL CREATES LEGAL PROTECTION FUND WITH NATIONAL IMMIGRANT PROTECTION CENTER, PLEDGES \$1 MILLION TO START THE FUND**

*Investment will expand legal services for those threatened with deportation by 50 percent; Mayor challenges private and philanthropic partners to join the effort*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the creation of a Legal Protection Fund in partnership with the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) to assist thousands of immigrants and refugees threatened with deportation, pledging \$1 million to start the fund. The Mayor also challenged the private and philanthropic community to join the effort to provide legal resources to these families in need.

"Chicago has a proud history of diversity and inclusion, and my administration will do everything in our power to ensure that immigrants remain safe, secure and supported. Because the election has created anxiety and uncertainty, we've created a legal fund to help ensure immigrants and refugees have access to legal guidance," said Mayor Emanuel. "I challenge Chicago's private and philanthropic communities to step up and join us in supporting this legal fund; immigrants have played an important role in shaping our City and we need their talent, drive and determination to continue moving Chicago forward."

"This Fund speaks to the ongoing commitment to defend our immigrant families and uphold the values that make Chicago a sanctuary city. It lets our communities know that they do not need to be afraid. We are united in support and will work to keep all families together" said 25th Ward Alderman Danny Solis.

"The establishment of the legal fund is yet another reaffirmation of the Mayor and City Council to our fellow neighbors, families, and friends across Chicago. We will not allow a callous application of a legal term to strip away the humanity of our immigrant and refugee neighbors," said 47th Ward Alderman Ameya Pawar.

According to the NIJC, approximately 150,000 Chicago area residents do not have status as legal permanent residents and tens of thousands more are worried about their immigration status. The Legal Protection Fund would work to provide immediate legal information, screenings, consultations, and representation to individuals who may be at risk for deportation.

“Access to legal services can have a life-changing, and sometimes lifesaving, impact for immigrants and their families. Legal counsel ensures that immigrants in our communities can defend their rights and live their lives here in safety and security, and with a sense of control over their destinies. The support of Mayor Emmanuel and the City of Chicago will help the National Immigrant Justice Center increase collaborations with community and faith-based organizations, schools and governmental agencies to bring legal services to more Chicago neighborhoods,” Mary Meg, Executive Director of the National Immigrant Justice Center.

This investment would allow NIJC and its partner law firms to serve more than 3,000 additional residents through legal consultations and representation in immigration cases, representing a 50 percent increase over the services they currently provide to immigrant communities.

This announcement is the latest in a series of actions the Emanuel Administration has taken to remind all residents that they are welcome in the City of Chicago. Yesterday, City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) Board of Trustees adopted a resolution affirming the college system's status as a Welcoming Campus, which protects students from discrimination or harassment based on immigration status.

Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel has launched a series of initiatives that improve the immigrant community's access to service, expand new and existing immigrant businesses, and welcomes and celebrates Chicago's diverse immigrant communities. These initiatives include launching the Cities for Citizenship Campaign with the Mayors of New York City and Los Angeles, which has grown into a bipartisan effort which works with 30 City and county leaders across America.

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