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April 30, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
300 7th Street Southwest
Washington, DC, 20024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I write to request a waiver from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to permit expedited work authorizations, temporary work authorizations or provisional work authorizations, as statutorily required by the Massachusetts State Legislature.

Work authorizations are pivotal in moving immigrants out of Massachusetts' emergency family shelter system that is already stretched past capacity and for long-term success as residents in the United States. My administration has seen strong results in our efforts to assist immigrants with applying for their work authorizations and connecting them with legal services, job training and placement programs. We greatly appreciate DHS's assistance in hosting a work authorization clinic for immigrants in November of 2023 that helped fast track thousands of applications. Since then, we have assisted 3,559 immigrants with work authorization applications, and because of the hard work of your team to drastically improve this process, we expect the vast majority have been approved.

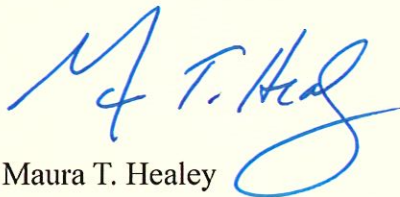
Our efforts to connect immigrants with work authorizations and jobs has benefitted our economic growth as we can help companies address critical workforce needs and grow their businesses. But in the intervening months, Massachusetts continues to see an unabating influx of immigrant arrivals. We need more federal assistance to support these families and connect them with job opportunities. Granting a waiver to meet the growing demand of work authorizations will help address the burdensome and costly application process.

In August 2023, I declared a state of emergency and sent a letter to you detailing the rapidly rising numbers of immigrant families arriving and the severe lack of shelter availability in the state. My declaration served as a notice that Massachusetts's shelter system was expanding at an unsustainable rate, and further financial assistance was quickly needed. I subsequently sent you a letter in September of 2023 outlining requests for changes to the work authorization process. As we have experienced in Massachusetts, the best way to help families exit the shelter system is to get them on a path to self-sufficiency the moment they arrive. In the absence of significant financial or structural assistance from Congress, we ask that you allow for work authorizations to be steadily expedited in order to alleviate this unsustainable situation.

These immigrants are ready to join the workforce and we need to support them in the process.

I appreciate your swift assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. T. Healey", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Maura T. Healey
Governor of Massachusetts