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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LEE AND SAN FRANCISCO INTERFAITH COUNCIL
ANNOUNCE NEW IMMIGRATION DEFENSE FUND**

*New program will provide resources, support and funding for frontline organizations
serving immigrant communities*

San Francisco, CA — Mayor Edwin M. Lee announced today that the City and County of San Francisco in partnership with the San Francisco Interfaith Council will launch a new funding program that will provide resources and support to non-profit and community-based organizations serving immigrant communities.

The new Immigration Defense Fund will bolster San Francisco's frontline immigrant-support organizations. These non-profit and community groups provide legal representation at deportation hearings, citizenship and asylum services, and legal counsel for unaccompanied minors, among a bevy of other services.

"San Francisco, is and always will be, a Sanctuary City for all residents," said Mayor Edwin M. Lee. "If our citizens live in fear of being deported, they are not visiting hospitals, going to their jobs, or even sending their children to school. When we support our residents, San Francisco is a healthier, safer, and more productive place to live. These organizations fulfill crucial roles for our immigrant communities and we are committed to upholding their mission. San Francisco will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our immigrant communities and fight for the progress we've achieved in this City."

The Fund is the result of a collaboration between the Mayor's Office, members of the Board of Supervisors, the philanthropic and business communities, and the Interfaith Council, a coalition comprised of more than 800 local congregations representing various faiths. The City will promote and encourage philanthropic institutions and individuals to support the Fund, which will be managed and overseen by the Interfaith Council.

"All across this nation, communities of faith are rising up to support immigrants being singled out and living in fear of deportation, and San Francisco is no exception," said Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council. "Throughout our City, a multitude of community and faith-based organizations have mobilized to respond to these threats by offering a myriad of protective legal services, training and workshops. By creating the 'Immigration Defense Fund' at this critical time, the San Francisco Interfaith Council will do its part to provide those organizations with needed supplemental funding to meet their increasing demands and give hope to our City's most vulnerable residents."

"This is a critical time in which all of our partners and stakeholders need to step up to the plate to protect and support our immigrant community," said Supervisor Malia Cohen. "The creation of the Immigration Defense Fund sends a strong message to the world and the Federal administration that San Francisco is standing united, regardless of faith, background or status."

The announcement of the Immigration Defense Fund is the latest measure to protect San Francisco's immigrant communities. Following the Presidential election, Mayor Lee announced an additional \$1.5 million in local funds to serve the legal needs of San Francisco immigrants. That allocation came on top of an earlier \$3.8 million commitment. Overall, Mayor Lee has pledged nearly \$14 million for immigration-related services over the next two years, and he's indicated his willingness to increase that total if necessary.

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