May 21, 2018

The Honorable Beth Harwell  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
425 5th Avenue North  
Suite 600 Cordell Hull Bldg.  
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: House Bill 2315

Dear Speaker Harwell,

Federal immigration laws are important to the safety and security of our great country, but House Bill 2315 is a solution looking for a problem and has primarily served to stir up fear on both sides of the issue, which distracts from focusing on real problems as well as the opportunities in front of us. Sanctuary cities are already prohibited by state law and do not exist in Tennessee.

Opponents of this bill have argued that the bill is unconstitutional. Yet, amendments during the legislative process removed significant questions regarding the bill's constitutionality. To be clear, this is not a mass deportation bill, and it does not require our law enforcement agencies to serve as immigration enforcement officials or make arrests based on immigration status.

In its final form, the bill prohibits the State and local governments from adopting ordinances, policies, or practices that subvert enforcement of federal law, and it permits—but does not require—local law enforcement to enter into agreements with federal agencies regarding cooperation. Tennessee law is already strong in this area. We prohibit ordinances and written policies that restrict local officials from complying with federal immigration laws, require employer verification of immigration status, encourage communication with federal agencies, and prohibit providing public benefits to those unlawfully in the United States.

For these reasons and others, House Bill 2315 will become law without my signature.

Respectfully,

Bill Haslam

cc: The Honorable Randy McNally, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Senate