

**November 16, 2021**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL SUPPORTS FEDERAL EFFORT TO PRIORITIZE WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND SAFETY IN IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined a coalition of 11 attorneys general, as well as several local agencies across the country, in a letter supporting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) plan to change its worksite enforcement practices to support enforcement of wage protections, workplace safety, labor rights, and other employment laws and standards.

[In the letter](#), Raoul and the coalition highlight several key recommendations to ensure that DHS' immigration enforcement policies and practices facilitate the ability of state and local labor enforcement officials to advance fair labor standards.

"An individual's immigration status should not affect their right to safe and fair treatment in the workplace," Raoul said. "I urge the Department of Homeland Security to create immigration policies that facilitate the work of labor agencies in protecting labor rights and workplace safety. I am committed to protecting the rights and dignity of all workers, and I will continue to advocate for policies that ensure workers have safe and fair working conditions."

State and local labor enforcement agencies investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate thousands of work-related claims against employers who illegally suppress labor standards and intimidate workers to prevent them from exercising their rights. The key role state and local entities play in labor enforcement makes them indispensable partners in any effort to develop immigration enforcement protocols that prioritize the need to protect the rights of workers. Further, immigrants make up a significant proportion of the workforce in the coalition's respective states and cities. Many vital industries depend on immigrant workers to meet their labor demands and provide critical services and goods to communities. At the same time, immigrant workers, especially those who are unauthorized to work in the United States, are particularly susceptible to abusive and unlawful labor conditions, and are especially vulnerable when bringing these violations to light. As a result, workers can be reluctant or even decline to pursue a case or testify in a legal proceeding out of fear that their employer would respond by reporting them or their family members to immigration authorities.

In today's letter, Raoul and the coalition urge DHS to consider a number of recommendations in its new effort, including:

- Ensuring a clear process for workers cooperating with labor law enforcement agencies to seek protection from deportation through the exercise of prosecutorial discretion.
- Making it explicit that state and local agencies that enforce workplace laws can certify S, T, and U Visas.
- Limiting enforcement based on potentially retaliatory tips from employers, and inform the public that DHS' hotline should not be used for such purposes.
- Establishing clear points of contact for state and local labor enforcement agencies to quickly address concerns and support effective communication with DHS.
- Taking steps to ensure immigrant workers and communities have access to information about their rights and protections.
- Supporting private actions to facilitate the enforcement of labor laws, extending protection to immigrant victims and witnesses to labor violations.
- Barring immigration enforcement activities at courthouses or state or local labor departments.

- Providing state and local labor enforcement agencies with access to witnesses held in civil immigration detention.

Joining Raoul in the letter are the attorneys general of California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York and Washington, as well as the Chicago Office of Labor Standards; the city of Philadelphia; the New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection; the Seattle Offices of Labor Standards, and Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; the Suffolk County district attorney; the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office; and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.