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In Light of Increased Deportation Fears, California Leaders Introduce Bills to Ensure Immigrants Have Fair Day in Court *Bills Seek to Increase Access to and Improve Existing Legal Representation of Immigrants*

SACRAMENTO, CA – California leaders sent a bold message to the incoming Presidential administration today through their introduction of proposals to improve crucial legal representation for immigrants in both the immigration and criminal legal court systems.

The stated intentions of the incoming Presidential administration - to deport millions of immigrants and monitor entire communities on the basis of their religious and ethnic affiliations - have grave consequences for the state of California and the over 10 million immigrants that call California home. In addition to instilling a climate of fear, these proposals would immediately increase the number of those in deportation proceedings, already at an all-time high under the current administration, as well as strengthen the direct pipeline from the criminal justice system to the deportation system as more people are arbitrarily prosecuted on the basis of skin color or immigration status alone.

Public defenders have a constitutional duty to advise their immigrant clients of both the options available to them in their criminal case as well as the immigration consequences of those options. Authored by Assemblymember Bonta (D – Oakland), AB 3 would provide public defenders with funding to effectively represent immigrant Californians, prevent wrongful convictions and their resulting unjust deportations, and ensure that states and counties meet their Sixth Amendment requirements of effective counsel.

Statistics show that Californian immigrants facing deportation are 4 times more likely to win their case with the support of an immigration attorney, with that jumping to 5 times for likely for those fighting their cases while detained. Authored by Senator Hueso (D – San Diego), the Due Process for All Act, or SB 6, would provide legal representation to immigrants in deportation proceedings, helping to keep families together, reduce staffing disruptions for employers and preserve the diversity of our communities across the state.

“Today’s legislative package sends a very clear message that every Californian deserves to have a fair day in court. As the first line of defense for immigrants navigating our criminal legal system, public defenders need crucial support to uphold their Constitutional duties for their clients. As the last line of defense for immigrants at risk of deportation, qualified immigration attorneys play a key role in keeping families across the state together. As we enter a new Presidential administration, AB 3 and SB 6 are the first of many steps California can take to safeguard our multicultural heritage,” said **Angie Junck, Supervising Attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center**.

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About the Immigrant Legal Resource Center

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is a national nonprofit that works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, law enforcement, and policy makers to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Through community education programs, legal training & technical assistance, and policy development & advocacy, the ILRC’s mission is to protect and defend the fundamental rights of immigrant families and communities. www.ilrc.org