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Media Advisory:

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Oakland leaders call for humanitarian relief for unaccompanied child immigrants

OAKLAND – Mayor Jean Quan, Vice Mayor Larry Reid and Councilmember Noel Gallo will ask tonight that the City of Oakland commit to aiding the humanitarian relief effort for unaccompanied children who have immigrated to the United States, in keeping with the spirit of Oakland’s status as a Sanctuary City.

“The bottom line here is clear and urgent: we are talking about children who need our help, and Oakland stands shoulder to shoulder with everyone offering that help,” said Mayor Quan, herself the daughter of Chinese immigrants. “Oakland has already seen scores of these children reunited with families or set up in temporary homes, and we are ready to accept many, many more.”

“This is a humanitarian crisis that requires a compassionate and urgent response,” said Councilmember Noel Gallo. “We must do what we can to support the health and wellbeing of these children. Our goal is to ensure that these unaccompanied children get the services they need, and are able to move from federal shelter facilities into the homes of relatives or host families as they await the results of their immigration proceedings.”

The resolution would commit the City to collaborating with local, state and federal organizations to address the short and long term needs of unaccompanied immigrant children entering into Oakland and the East Bay region. This would include:

- Publicizing the need for host families and sponsors who can provide safe and stable housing opportunities for the unaccompanied children and working to move children from shelters into homes of relatives or host families as soon as possible; and
- Identifying city resources to ensure that City Departments, in partnership with non-profit organizations, can offer a continuum of culturally competent relief services to meet the medical, mental health, educational and legal needs of these children and their families.

The resolution also asks President Barack Obama, federal, state and local officials to:

1. Stop the deportations of all children by granting them refugee status under domestic and international law, access to legal representation and due process;
2. Support congressional funding for humanitarian care and essential services for the children; reject further expenditures on border patrol and militarization of the border; and
3. Support H.R. 4936, the Vulnerable Immigrant Voice Act of 2014, to provide legal representation to unaccompanied minors and mentally disabled individuals during immigration proceedings.

The resolution will be considered by the Oakland City Council at its meeting tonight at City Hall.

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