

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 19, 2016

## **MAYOR GARCETTI ANNOUNCES LEGAL FUND TO FIGHT FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS**

**LOS ANGELES**—Mayor Eric Garcetti was joined today by elected officials and philanthropic leaders to announce creation of the L.A. Justice Fund — a \$10 million fund to provide assistance to immigrants facing deportation proceedings without a lawyer.

“People who have built their lives in America have rights, and they deserve all of the protections that our legal system provides,” said Mayor Garcetti. “The L.A. Justice Fund will reach out to people who are American by every measure except the papers they hold — our family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. They are part of our community, and we will fight for them.”

The L.A. Justice Fund is a partnership between the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, the California Community Foundation, the Weingart Foundation and the California Endowment. The fund will be comprised of \$5 million from government funds and \$5 million sourced by private foundations.

“We must increase our efforts to provide legal representation for immigrant residents who need a lawyer but can’t afford one,” said Supervisor Hilda L. Solis. “Building public-private partnerships between Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, and philanthropic organizations will be absolutely crucial as we pioneer this endeavor. Right now, the most important step we can take is to establish this legal aid fund so that our most vulnerable communities know that we are working to keep them safe and protected.”

The L.A. Justice Fund will begin serving immigrant Angelenos early in 2017. In the coming weeks, the key partners will come together to determine how the funds will be allocated most effectively.

“A fair system of justice should provide immigrants who confront deportation — including children and families striving to realize their hopes and dreams — with lawyers to protect their rights,” said Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer. “Today we announce a partnership with private philanthropy to fund counsel that will help keep families together. In this climate of fear, it’s crucial that immigrants turn to legitimate lawyers so they aren’t victimized by scam artists who prey on their vulnerability.”

In the weeks since the November election, Los Angeles has reaffirmed itself as a welcoming and inclusive city. Mayor Garcetti and Chief Charlie Beck have announced that the LAPD will continue upholding Special Order #40, which means that officers will not initiate investigations solely to determine a person’s immigration status. Mayor Garcetti has also convened immigration forums to address community concerns, and joined municipal leaders from around the country in calling for the President-elect to extend DACA in the incoming Administration.

“I congratulate the philanthropic community for stepping up to the plate to help us legally defend the immigrant residents of the City and County of Los Angeles,” said Councilmember Gil Cedillo. “This multi-sector and cross-governmental cooperative will serve as a template to solve future social challenges. United, we will be better prepared to respond to Trump and give our constituents a sense of relief knowing that we are fighting for them.”

These efforts dovetail with Mayor Garcetti’s strong commitment to improving service to local immigrant

populations. In 2013, he re-established the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, which creates programs and initiatives to support immigrant integration in the City of Los Angeles.

"We need to protect hard-working immigrant families who contribute immensely to our economy and quality of life in Los Angeles," said California Community Foundation President & CEO Antonia Hernández. "We're proud to work alongside government partners and fellow foundations to ensure even the most vulnerable in immigrant communities have access to legal services and the due process they rightly deserve."

According to estimates, there are 3,700 unrepresented detained immigrants in the greater Los Angeles area, and potentially thousands of non-detained immigrants that are or may soon be in legal proceedings without a lawyer.

"This is a time for all of us to come together to protect our communities and our values," said Fred Ali, president and chief executive officer of the Weingart Foundation. "Diversity, inclusion and equity are at the core of what Los Angeles stands for. Everyone — regardless of immigration status — should be allowed to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. These are the values that the L.A. Justice Fund will help safeguard, and the Weingart Foundation is proud to be a part of an effort that quickly coalesced government and philanthropy around this critically important issue."

Angelenos seeking to contribute to the L.A. Justice Fund can do so by visiting [calfund.org/lajusticefund](http://calfund.org/lajusticefund).

"We applaud the City and County of Los Angeles in establishing the L.A. Justice Fund whose focus will be to protect our undocumented brothers and sisters who have contributed significantly to our economy and enrich California's diversity," said Robert K. Ross, M.D., president and CEO of the California Endowment. "To ensure the health of our great state remains strong we need to make sure all of our residents are safe, healthy and protected."

###