

September 25, 2024

To: Mayor Victoria Woodards, Deputy Mayor John Hines, and Council members Sarah Rumbaugh, Jamika Scott, Sandesh Saldage, Joe Bushnell, Kiara Daniels, Olgly Diaz, and Kristina Walker

From: Tacoma Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA)

re: Letter September 10, 2024 to Representative Derek Kilmer

Dear Mayor and Council members:

CIRA would like to extend its deep gratitude for the advocacy of the Tacoma City Council and the leadership in particular of Council member Walker and her staff for drafting a letter to Representative Kilmer regarding the NWIPC and the transition to the incoming 6th District Representative. We also extend our gratitude to the memory of Council member Katherine Ushka, who was a steadfast supporter of the immigrant community.

We are grateful to the Council for being proactive in highlighting the many issues of concern at the NWIPC to the incoming 6th District Representative. The residents of NWIPC are residents of Tacoma and among the most vulnerable immigrants in our city. We appreciate your advocacy to ensure their living standards are sanitary; they have adequate and healthy food and water; and that they receive quality health care. We thank you for emphasizing the excessive and lengthy use of solitary confinement, the use of force, and sexual assaults within NWIPC. We also appreciate that you recognize how the lack of free or low cost phone calls and no right to legal representation make these issues particularly problematic. Detainees often have no way to communicate harms they have experienced and no one to defend them. They are faced with immense language barriers as well as a complicated legal system that are impediments to protecting their rights.

CIRA's "duty and power [is] to study problems and issues specifically impacting the immigrant and refugee communities in the City of Tacoma and provide written recommendations, context, and input to Tacoma's policy makers, including to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and services, and practices specific to the purpose of furthering immigrant and refugee access to and participation in Tacoma's economic, cultural, and civic life." [Resolution 39892] We take this mandate seriously and will continue to seek your support for concrete policies, outreach, and expenditures that assist all immigrants and refugees in Tacoma.

Thank you,

Maricres Valdez Castro
Iulia Didkivska, 2nd Vice Chair
Natalie Ghayoumi
Eunice Kalembo
Maurice Lekea
Andy Mejia
Hugo Nicolas, Chair
Linus Nyaga
Thierry Ruboneka
Alicia Sands
Emmanuella Shasha, 1st Vice Chair
Nixon Tenga
Lydia Zepeda