

Honorable Abigail Spanberger
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Honorable Ami Bera
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Honorable Andy Levin
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Honorable Brad Schneider
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Honorable Brian Mast
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Honorable Claudia Tenney
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Honorable Darrell Issa
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Honorable Dina Titus
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Honorable Gregory Meeks
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Honorable Joaquin Castro
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Honorable Karen Bass
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Honorable Lee Zeldin
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Honorable Adam Kinzinger
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Honorable Andy Barr
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Honorable Ann Wagner
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Honorable Brad Sherman
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Honorable Chrissy Houlahan
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Honorable Colin Allred
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Honorable David Cicilline
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Honorable Gerald Connolly
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Honorable Ilhan Omar
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Honorable Joe Wilson
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Honorable Kathy Manning
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Honorable Maria Elvira Salazar
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Honorable Albio Sires
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Honorable Andy Kim
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Honorable August Pfluger
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Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
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Honorable Christopher Smith
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Honorable Dan Meuser
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Honorable Dean Phillips
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Honorable Greg Steube
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Honorable Jim Costa
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Honorable Juan Vargas
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Honorable Ken Buck
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Honorable Mark Green
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Honorable Michael McCaul
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Honorable Nicole Malliotakis
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Honorable Peter Meijer
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Honorable Ronny Jackson
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Honorable Sara Jacobs
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Honorable Scott Perry
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Honorable Steve Chabot
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Honorable Susan Wild
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Honorable Ted Lieu
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Honorable Theodore Deutch
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Honorable Tim Burchett
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Honorable Tom Malinowski
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Honorable Vicente Gonzalez
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Honorable William Keating
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Young Kim
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 11, 2021

Re: H.R. 4526, the “City and State Diplomacy Act”

Honorable Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the more than 500,000 businesses in Los Angeles County and our 1400 members, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is urging its strong support for H.R. 4526, the bipartisan “City and State Diplomacy Act” introduced by Congressman Ted W. Lieu (D-Los Angeles County) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC). The bill will support state and local diplomacy efforts with counterparts abroad and will establish an Office of Subnational Diplomacy at the State Department, which will coordinate U.S. policy and programs in support of city and state engagement with foreign governments and officials.

The Chamber would like to see H.R. 4526 come to fruition in the current 117th United States Congress. Los Angeles County is home to one of the most diverse populations in the United States as well as one of the largest immigrant populations of any place in the country. The City of Los Angeles, the second largest city in the United States, is home to nearly 100 consulates – more than any other city on the West Coast and any other city outside Washington D.C. and New York. Additionally, Los Angeles is home to the busiest container port not only in the United States but in the Americas and has one of the largest international airports in the country. If Los Angeles were a country, its economy would rank 16th in the world while the State of California would rank 5th. This is a strong indication of the importance of Los Angeles globally and the potential it has to become a global player.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that cities, including Los Angeles, are resilient and assertive in the face of a global crisis. Mayors have been confronted with tough choices, and while it was the federal government that often provided financial lifeline, cities did the greater part of the work.

The pandemic has reinforced the need for cities to play a more prominent role in international affairs. Some cities have already made strides on their own. In recent years, our visionary Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, for example, created the Mayor's Office of International Relations and appointed former U.S. Ambassador Nina Hachigian to lead the office as Deputy Mayor. The federal government must institutionalize these efforts by establishing the Office of Subnational Diplomacy at the State Department per H.R. 4526.

President Biden could and should make history by creating an Office of Subnational Diplomacy, thus empowering cities and states across the country to play a more prominent, robust and comprehensive role in international affairs. In an ever-changing, interconnected and globalized world, decentralization is key to nurturing a globally-engaged and internationally-conscious population. Local governments are already on the frontlines of such pressing issues as migration, the pandemic, climate change, trade, and a myriad other issues. The Biden Administration should reassess and reexamine our national approach to diplomacy and engage states and cities as a means to help us overcome isolation particularly in light of the global pandemic. States and Cities can offer tremendous help in this regard. In turn, local engagement could help the United States retake its global credibility by reestablishing and deepening international collaborations and cooperation.

For these reasons, the Chamber urges strong support for H.R. 4526 and calls on Members of Congress to support the bill advance in the Congressional legislative processes. Thank you for your consideration, and if you have any questions, please contact Harry Semerdjian, Senior Public Policy Manager, at HSemerdjian@lachamber.com.

Sincerely,



Maria S. Salinas
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce