March 13, 2018

The Honorable Ron Johnson  The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
Chairman  Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Homeland  Senate Committee on Homeland Security and  
Security and Governmental Affairs  Governmental Affairs  
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20510  

The Honorable Trey Gowdy  The Honorale Elijah Cummings  
Chairman  Ranking Member  
House Committee on Oversight and  House Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform  Government Reform  
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20515  

RE: The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act (H.R. 50/S. 1523)

Dear Senators Johnson and McCaskill and Representatives Gowdy and Cummings:

On behalf of the Big 7, a coalition of national organizations representing state and local officials, we applaud your efforts to make improvements to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) of 1995. Monitoring federal regulations and planning for unfunded mandates continues to be one of the most pressing issues for state and local leaders. In particular, we support strengthening the required analysis of pending legislation and your call for a strong regulatory look-back process. This additional information is critical for improving both the legislative and regulatory processes.

As you know, UMRA was designed to limit the imposition of unfunded federal mandates on state, local, and tribal governments by requiring the Congressional Budget Office and regulatory agencies to provide a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the anticipated costs of legislation and certain regulations, respectively. As UMRA begins its third decade, the goal of curbing “the practice of imposing unfunded Federal mandates on State and local governments” is even more important.

A past report by the White House Office of Management and Budget stated federal regulations and unfunded mandates cost states, cities and the general public between $44 and $62 billion each year. With many states and local governments facing revenue restrictions and growing local financial burdens, the federal government should avoid imposing any new unfunded mandates. Moreover, federal regulatory agencies should work more closely with state and local governments and other stakeholders during the rule-making process to gather input and identify practical solutions.

We commend you for your leadership in advocating the enactment of this legislation, and we look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

David Adkins  Matthew D. Chase  
CEO and Executive Director  Executive Director  
The Council of State Governments  National Association of Counties
Scott Pattison  
Executive Director  
National Governors Association

William T. Pound  
Executive Director  
National Conference of State Legislatures

Clarence Anthony  
CEO and Executive Director  
National League of Cities

Tom Cochran  
CEO and Executive Director  
The U.S. Conference of Mayors

Marc Ott  
Executive Director  
International City/County Management Association

CC: Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives