# Policy Directives and Resolutions for Consideration

## 2021 Legislative Summit
Tampa, Florida

## DEBATE CALENDAR

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WHEREAS, advance refunding of tax-exempt municipal bonds can be a financial tool that saves state and local governments billions of dollars by allowing them to provide more comprehensive savings at lower costs to taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the refunding of tax-exempt municipal bonds is a mechanism by which states and localities finance infrastructure projects, utilities, education, and other general purpose bonds; and

WHEREAS, a refunding occurs when the proceeds from one bond are used to pay off another bond, typically at a lower interest rate; and

WHEREAS, the Investing in our Communities Act as introduced in the 116th Congress restores the ability for states to advance refund their tax-exempt municipal bonds, which was eliminated by the Tax Cuts and Job Act of 2017; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Conference of State Legislatures urges Congress to pass legislation that restores the ability of states to finance public infrastructure that is cost-effective and consistent with NCSL principles of preserving fiscal viability and tax reform.
WHEREAS, the continuing COVID pandemic has contributed to a significant dislocation and displacement of the workforce, and

WHEREAS, the potential for an expanded registered apprenticeship program in the United States can help workers reconnect to the economy while enhancing their skills and opportunities, and

WHEREAS, innovative new registered apprenticeship programs in non-traditional economic sectors such as health care, technology, and personal services will open pathways for increased diversity and inclusion in those occupations, and

WHEREAS, the traditional “earn while you learn,” approach of registered apprenticeship will reduce economic barriers to higher skilled occupations that currently are limited to paid tuition and fee based courses, and

WHEREAS, the traditional “on-the-job” learning requirements of registered apprenticeship are a successful learning style for many students who prefer learning skills through hands-on experience in addition to tradition classroom coursework, and

WHEREAS, providing incentives to employers to participate in registered apprenticeship programs in non-traditional sectors through tax policies and apprentice utilization agreements, when combined with long-term employer commitments, will establish a sustainable future for apprenticeship programs, and

WHEREAS, the success of traditional registered apprenticeship programs that are financially sustainable and jointly managed create tens of thousands high wage and
WHEREAS, replicating the success of traditional registered apprenticeship programs to non-traditional occupations will take significant resources and support from the United States Department of Labor,

WHEREAS, there are very successful apprenticeship programs in the United States and throughout the world, 

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCSL support federal initiatives and funding to expand state registered apprenticeship programs into non-traditional occupations and careers, considering best practices and policies found in other countries.
The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) recognizes the contributions immigrants and refugees make to our state economies, cultures and communities while also recognizing the challenges facing our country in matters related to immigration. Federal immigration policy must strike a balance among core principles of our democracy: preserving the safety and security of our nation, encouraging the economic strength of our states and communities, and recognizing our history as a nation of immigrants. The impact of the federal government’s immigration policy decisions is directly felt by the states who not only implement programs required by federal law but also encourage the integration of immigrants into the economic, social and civic life of their adopted communities. States bear the costs of immigration in many areas including education, health and law enforcement systems, with limited federal reimbursement.

Immigration Reform

State legislators call on Congress and the Administration to enact immigration reform that enhances our border security and addresses the imbalance in the state-federal relationship. Immigration reform and implementation requires true collaboration between state and federal leaders. Our nation’s immigration laws must not contain unfunded mandates nor preempt areas of existing state authority. Federal immigration reform will not be comprehensive unless it addresses the fiscal and economic impact of immigration on the states.

Federal immigration reform legislation must also provide a path to citizenship for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigrants and immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children (DREAMers), have lived most of their lives in the U.S.,
and Identify as American. These immigrants have contributed to our economy through work and have paid taxes and have been productive members of society.

**SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Border Security & Enforcement**

Securing all of America’s borders, ports, and airports is essential to preserving our national security and maintaining the safety of all Americans. NCSL urges the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities with regard to border security and encourages a renewed state-federal cooperation in countering human trafficking, weapons and drug smuggling. NCSL urges the federal government to increase its enforcement of these crimes.

NCSL supports full, federal funding for increases in Department of Homeland Security border enforcement systems and processes where they are most needed and necessary to create a plan for the effective use of new technologies and infrastructure at the borders.

**The Role of State and Local Law Enforcement**

NCSL is strongly opposed to any efforts to shift enforcement of civil immigration law to state and local law enforcement agencies. State legislators believe that enforcement of federal civil immigration law is a federal responsibility and that state involvement in immigration enforcement activities should be discretionary with each state. NCSL opposes efforts to criminalize violations of civil federal immigration law in an effort to shift federal enforcement responsibilities to state and local law officers. State and local government law enforcement and public safety personnel must already incarcerate, detain and transport illegal immigrants who have committed crimes, without adequate federal funding. NCSL strongly supports full reimbursement to states for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). NCSL also opposes any effort to coerce state participation in enforcement of federal immigration law by withholding SCAAP program funds.
EMPLOYMENT RELATED MIGRATION

Workforce Visa Reforms
NCSL supports workforce immigration reforms that improve the current worker visa programs, increase the number of H-1B visa admissions based on need, streamline the employer sponsorship process, and guide the nation towards economic recovery. Many states rely on migrant labor for key industries such as agriculture and farm work. The federal government should implement immigration reforms that provide temporary or permanent legal status to these workers in order to stabilize the workforce in these affected industries.

Worksite Enforcement
NCSL believes that while worksite employment verification is a critical component of overall immigration enforcement, it is an area that requires reform and improvements in order to maximize effectiveness and efficient use of resources. NCSL opposes federal efforts to treat state governments differently from the private sector in meeting federal requirements designed to identify workers who are not authorized to work, as well as employers who knowingly hire unauthorized workers.

Enforcement Activities
NCSL believes that federal enforcement activities – at the worksite or in communities - must be coordinated with state and local government. NCSL urges the federal government to be mindful that the states bear the primary responsibility for the children who are separated from their families as a result of federal enforcement activities. NCSL supports federal coordination with child welfare and law enforcement agencies to end the policy of family separation, take swift action to locate and reunite families, including families that may have been separated by deportation and-guarantee that children are not endangered.

ELIMINATING COST-SHIFTS TO THE STATES
State Impact Assistance
NCSL supports the provision of flexible federal financial resources to states in order to implement and execute immigration reform efforts. While states have been able to serve immigrant populations with COVID-19 stimulus resources for health care, cash assistance, and food assistance, these funds are temporary. State impact grants continue to be an important component of the state-federal partnership in immigration reform as these represent a reliable, guaranteed funding stream for the provision of public health services, education, and English language acquisition to immigrant populations. State impact grants require state legislative appropriation, while providing needed flexibility and accountability.

PERMANENT, TEMPORARY IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Temporary Worker Program

NCSL supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a temporary worker program and the creation of an earned legalization program for immigrants currently in the country without authorization. Such reform would increase productivity and wages for our entire economy, stimulating job growth and increasing tax revenue NCSL opposes outright amnesty as well as federal efforts to deny benefits to legal immigrants and to citizens who are foreign born.

Refugee Assistance

NCSL supports federal efforts to assist individuals and families forced to flee their native land in fear for their personal safety. The United States has a long history of welcoming refugees and is one of the largest refugee resettlement countries in the world. Federal support to states is critical for the provision of income and medical assistance, social services, education, employment and training and other services as needed. NCSL believes that funding should be more flexible to allow states to respond to changing needs.

The federal government should provide English and citizenship instruction as well as job training to refugees, where possible, before they arrive in the United States.
NCSL strongly urges the federal government to avoid further placements in areas that are already heavily impacted with refugee or Entrant populations, experiencing a shortage of rental housing for low-income households, and experiencing overcrowding in the local school system. NCSL supports refugee placement policies that promote successful integration of refugees in the placement community. Placement should be tailored to give refugees economic, affordable housing, educational, language access, and community engagement opportunities in their new area. NCSL urges the federal government to continue to work with states on the issue of secondary migration.

NCSL urges the federal government to continue the health screening that is currently provided to the refugees, where possible, before they arrive in the United States and to improve follow-up such as providing instruction for continued medical care to refugees in the home and increasing outreach to bridge language and cultural differences. State health screening support is critical and should not be eliminated.

NCSL urges the federal government to coordinate and consult with state and local governments as an integral component of a successful placement policy and we urge the federal government to improve its efforts in this area. It is equally important to have the voluntary agencies and organizations representing refugees participate in this coordinated effort. NCSL supports extended protection for victims of trafficking, victims of domestic violence, and unaccompanied minors. NCSL supports continuing trafficking and domestic violence victim assistance programs through VOCA and other federal grants.

**CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION**

**Naturalization and Integration**

NCSL supports the promotion of citizenship and reducing institutional barriers to citizenship as national priorities. Delays in citizenship applications are unjustified and costly to applicants. The federal government should allocate sufficient resources for
more efficient citizenship adjudication and integration processes. The costs of becoming
a citizen are excessive and a barrier to those working families who seek citizenship.
NCSL strongly urges the federal government to assist the states in their efforts to
promote naturalization and to address all barriers to naturalization.
NCSL urges Congress and the administration to continue to work with NCSL and its members on implementation of REAL ID that recognize national security but do not impede the sovereignty of state licenses of place a federal agency or agent as permanent and ongoing authority for determining state license uses and requirements. NCSL supports efforts to extend existing deadlines until obstacles to implementation are addressed. In addition, NCSL supports the use of waivers by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, for states that have adopted other forms of compatible identification.
WHEREAS, Island states and territories across the United States, including those in the Indo-Pacific Command (Indo-PACOM) Region, are mostly dependent on the import of goods.

WHEREAS, Island communities rely on transport by water carrier, the majority of these goods are transported as waterborne cargo, unlike communities in the continental U.S. that possess alternative means of transporting goods by truck and rail.

WHEREAS, current agricultural specific and aircraft to remote destination subsidies exist within the USDA and USDOT, respectively.

WHEREAS, subsidies do not currently exist for general cargo transport to and within U.S. island states and territories.

WHEREAS, due to these island communities' dependency on the import of goods, maritime support in the form of federal water cargo subsidies is necessary to ensure localized economic security.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) urges Congress to fund a broad subsidy for trans-Pacific, trans-Atlantic, and interisland waterborne cargo to improve the affordability of imported goods.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NCSL requests that U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, the most appropriate federal...
agency, develop and implement such a federal waterborne cargo subsidies program and that sources of any subsidies may be from existing or newly created federal programs.