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**New York City Council Members Applaud
Illinois Governor's Decision to Withdraw from Secure Communities
*Elected Officials Demand Governor Cuomo End New York's Participation***

New York, NY, May 5, 2011 – Today several New York City Council Members congratulated Illinois Governor Pat Quinn for ending the state's participation in Secure Communities (SCOMM). Now these same elected officials are demanding that Governor Andrew Cuomo follow suit in the State of New York.

Secure Communities, popularly known as SCOMM, is a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) program that targets certain individuals for deportation by relying on data shared by state and local law enforcement authorities, namely fingerprint records. First piloted under the Bush administration, the program has rapidly expanded under Obama's direction to over 1,210 jurisdictions in the United States, with the goal of covering every local, state, and federal prison and jail by 2013. Created administratively, not by Congressional mandate, SCOMM has faced widespread controversy over its goals and procedures. State and local officials upon whose cooperation the program depends have not been clear about expectations, including whether participation in the program is mandatory and which type of individuals are being targeted. At their own expense, cooperating state and local facilities will hold identified individuals at the request of ICE under a "detainer" until ICE transfers them to immigration custody. Among individuals that have been identified for deportation by SCOMM are U.S. citizens and lawful residents as well as undocumented individuals who have committed either a low level offense or no crime at all.

"Immigration policies such as the SCOMM program lead to unjust detentions and deportations that will only make for insecure communities and destabilize our immigrant families," said NYC Council Member and Chair of committee on Immigration Affairs, Daniel Dromm (D-Queens). "That is why I commend Governor Quinn on his just decision to withdraw from the program and implore Governor Cuomo to renew his commitment to support our immigrant community and immediately rescind the SCOMM program in the State of New York."

"I congratulate Illinois Governor Pat Quinn on his decision to pull out of the federal 'Secure Communities' program," said NYC Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez. "The program, although allegedly intended to arrest and deport only immigrants convicted of serious felonies, has in practice primarily rounded up immigrants guilty of minor and nonviolent offenses. Across the country, local law enforcement has used 'Secure Communities' to justify the profiling of immigrants, primarily those from Latin America. These are men and women who have spent decades in the United States, working, going to school and raising families, who now have to live in fear of the government.

I am calling on New York to follow the bold example set by Illinois, and end our State's participation in the 'Secure Communities' program. At the end of last year, I introduced a

resolution calling on the Governor to rescind the agreement between our State and the Federal Government to enforce this program, and I am taking up that call again. New York and Illinois are both States with large immigrant communities, and it is these immigrants that helped to make both States economic powerhouses. However, if we continue to allow these misguided immigration policies to plague the more than 20% of New York State's population who are immigrants, we risk destroying one of the bases of that development. 'Secure Communities' is destroying our communities, by breaking up families, and creating a climate of fear. Now is the time to join Illinois in standing up for immigrants, and standing against 'Secure Communities'."

"It is time for New York State to join Illinois in saying 'no' to the expansion of ICE's already-overzealous immigration enforcement tactics, which indiscriminately aim to deport as many immigrants as possible, regardless of whether they pose a real threat to society," said Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. "No matter what ICE says Secure Communities, like other local immigration enforcement programs, undermines efforts to build trust between immigrant communities and the police, imposes costs on states and localities and does not even prioritize dangerous individuals with a history of criminal activity. We look forward to working with Governor Andrew Cuomo to rescind the current agreement so that New York can become the second state in the U.S. to take a stand against this enforcement program."

"I commend Illinois for refusing to participate in the Secure Communities Program and taking a stand on this important issue," said Council Member Mathieu Eugene. "The Secure Communities Program will have a large impact on all immigrant communities and threaten to tear apart families. Now, it is time for New York to follow the same path as Illinois and take immediate action."

"I am happy to hear Governor Pat Quinn is ending Illinois's participation in the Secure Communities Program," said NYC Council Member Jumaane Williams. "The program wastes valuable resources and often ends up detaining immigrants convicted of no crimes or minor offenses and ends up destroying families and communities. If Illinois can withdraw from the program, there is no reason why New York can't too!"

"Yesterday news that the state of Illinois is pulling out of the controversial federal immigration program, Secure Communities (SCOMM) could not have come any sooner," said Javier H. Valdes, Deputy Director of Make the Road New York. "SCOMM represents a dragnet approach to immigration enforcement that diminishes the trust between immigrants and local law enforcement because it primarily leads to the detention and deportation of immigrants who have been convicted of no crimes, or only very minor offenses."

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