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Candidates for Fairfax County Office Commit to Ending County's Voluntary Collaboration with ICE

For Release April 8, 2019 -- Fairfax, Virginia -- Twelve individuals running for office in Fairfax County, Virginia, have signed a pledge to support the proposed Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All. Those who have signed (see list below) include candidates for Chair of the Board of Supervisors, District Supervisor, School Board, and Commonwealth Attorney. Originally drafted in late 2017 by attorneys working in concert with the Fairfax for All coalition, the Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All would end Fairfax County's voluntary collaboration with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The Fairfax for All coalition is asking all candidates for the offices of Chair of the Board of Supervisors, District Supervisor, School Board, Commonwealth Attorney, and Sheriff in Fairfax County to sign this pledge (pledge and ordinance available at <https://fairfaxforall.org/pledge>). Candidates for the Board of Supervisors who sign the pledge are committing to introduce the Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All within 45 days of taking office, and all candidates who sign the pledge are committing to support the Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All.

Signatories to date include:

Board Chair candidates: Tim Chapman, Ryan McElveen, Alicia Plerhoples

Supervisor candidates: Irma Corado (Braddock District), Laurie Dodd (Hunter Mill District), Shyamali Hauth (Hunter Mill District), Larysa Kautz (Lee District)

Commonwealth Attorney candidate: Steve Descano

School Board candidates: Ricardy Anderson (Mason District), Karl Frisch (Providence District), Abrar Omeish (At-large), Jessica Swanson (Mason District)

Key provisions of the Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All address:

1. prohibiting the county from involvement in civil immigration enforcement;
2. the sharing and collecting of information;
3. expanding the list of documents that are acceptable to prove identity;
4. providing funding for legal representation for county residents in deportation proceedings [there is no right to counsel in immigration court].

Organizations came together as a coalition about two years ago to urge Fairfax County to end its voluntary collaboration with ICE, to respect the human rights and affirm the dignity of all people and to ensure that true justice and safety are afforded to all residents of Fairfax County. In January of 2018, Fairfax for All had its first victory, when Sheriff Stacey Kincaid announced she had given notice to ICE to terminate a voluntary intergovernmental service agreement that existed between ICE and Fairfax County through her office. Unfortunately, Sheriff Kincaid also chose to revise other policies in 2018 and now requires her office to notify ICE of the release date and time for immigrants for whom ICE issues a voluntary detainer request, resulting in an average of nine individuals being turned over to ICE from the Adult Detention Center each week (based on data from summer 2018). Fairfax County has one of the highest rates in the country of compliance with voluntary detainer requests from ICE (see data at <http://bit.ly/detainer-compliance-rates>).

Despite numerous public and private meetings with county officials over the past year, including many with individual Supervisors, the current Supervisors have ignored the voices of those most directly affected by the county's current policies by not taking action to address the urgent needs of the immigrant community.

Working to uplift immigrant-led organizations and community members, Fairfax for All and numerous other organizations and county individuals continue to urge the current Board of Supervisors to take action to end the county's voluntary collaboration with ICE and introduce the Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All. The county's current policies and voluntary collaboration with ICE are harming migrants residing in Fairfax County and, with every day that county leadership fails to act, people are living in fear and more county residents are detained. Adding to the urgency is the uncertainty over the future of DACA and Temporary Protected Status at the federal level and in the courts, which could leave thousands of additional county residents who currently have legal status vulnerable to detention and deportation later this year as that status is taken from them.

Leadership from current Fairfax County officials is lacking on these issues. The candidates who have signed the pledge stand with the immigrant community and recognize the urgency with which these issues must be addressed.

Fairfax for All is a coalition of grassroots, civil rights, immigrant rights, and faith-based organizations dedicated to building sanctuary in Fairfax County. We seek to end policies that render migrants and communities of color vulnerable to racial profiling, discrimination, detention, and deportation, including ending Fairfax County's voluntary cooperation and collaboration with federal immigration authorities. Member organizations of Fairfax for All include: CASA, Centreville Immigration Forum, DMV Sanctuary Congregation Network, Herndon-Reston Indivisible Immigration Issues Committee, La ColectiVA, NAKASEC, and Tenants and Workers United. For additional details about Fairfax for All, please visit fairfaxforall.org.

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