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Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA 02133

February 23, 2009

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) I ask for your support of immigrant communities in the FY10 House budget and request the inclusion of immigrant and refugee priorities in your letter to House leadership. In these difficult economic times, we cannot afford to lose focus on the state-funded services that will strengthen Massachusetts' economic, civic, and social fabric with an eye towards our long-term growth. Maintaining and/or increasing funding to programs that promote the economic, social, and physical well-being of immigrants helps to ensure that they will be productive contributors to the Commonwealth as workers, business-owners, voters, and community members.

Immigrants make up 14% of the Commonwealth's population and 17% of our shrinking workforce. The continuation of services that provide immigrants with the chance to develop their potential is vital not only to the immigrant community but to the success of the Commonwealth as a whole. Immigrants have created businesses that bring in billions of dollars in revenue and have paid up to \$304 million in state and federal taxes in the Boston area alone. This is why we at MIRA, as a representative of the immigrant and refugee community, respectfully request that you continue your support for the newest members of our Commonwealth by including the following in the FY10 House Ways & Means budget:

- Maintain funding for the **Citizenship for New Americans Program** (line item: 4003-0122) at \$650,000;
- Fund **Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages** (line item 7035-0002) at its FY'08 level of \$30.1 million;
- Implement the **Dedicated Fund for Workplace ABE and ESOL**, as recommended by the MA Workforce Investment Board, including full funding for the **Workplace Training Fund**;
- Fund the **Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment Program** (line item: 4513-1130) at \$2.2 million;
- Fund **MassHealth Outreach and Enrollment Grants** (line item 4000-0352) at \$3.5 million; and
- Continue support for the **New Americans Agenda**.

We greatly appreciate your support for immigrant communities in Massachusetts. Please find enclosed a copy of MIRA's 2009-2010 advocacy agenda. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eva A. Millona  
Executive Director  
MIRA Coalition