



Contact: Jas Chana, Media & Communications Manager, jchana@tenement.org, 646-518-3063

TENEMENT MUSEUM INVITES IMMIGRATION POLICYMAKERS TO VISIT MUSEUM HOPES TO REMIND POLICYMAKERS OF HUMAN IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION DEBATE

August 6, 2018, New York, NY—The Tenement Museum today announced it has invited members of both the House and Senate subcommittees on Immigration and Border Security for a private visit of the Museum in an effort to draw attention to the impact immigration policy and rhetoric has on the lives of real people and families.

The decision to invite immigration policymakers to the Museum, which specializes in telling the stories of individual immigrants, migrants and refugees, was prompted by the institution's increasing concern that the humanity of immigrants is missing from America's current immigration policy debates.

In the invite, Tenement Museum President Kevin Jennings writes that at a time when immigration is much misunderstood and even maligned, "the education we provide is more important than ever."

An individual invitation was sent to the 13 members of the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security (comprised of 8 Republicans and 5 Democrats) and the 15 members of the Senate Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration (comprised of 8 Republicans and 7 Democrats).

Together, the House and Senate subcommittees on Immigration and Border Security have jurisdiction over the United States' immigration, citizenship, and refugee laws. The subcommittees also have oversight over the function of all immigration-focused agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration services, and of the immigration-related functions of all other agencies, such as the Department of Justice and the Department of State.

"By inviting members of the subcommittees on Immigration and Border Security, we're hoping to provide policymakers with the same perspective on immigration that we provide to every visitor to the Tenement Museum: an ability to see how the decisions of those in power impact and change the lives of countless people and families," said Tenement Museum president Kevin Jennings about the initiative. "We hope to connect immigration policymakers with the dream shared by immigrants past and present: the hope for a better life in America."

The initiative is part of the American Alliance of Museum's #InviteCongress annual campaign, which is currently in its 7th year. The campaign is intended so that elected officials can gain firsthand experience of what museums do to educate the public and serve their community.

The invitation from Tenement Museum President Kevin Jennings to the House and Senate Subcommittees on Immigration and Border Security can be found, in full, below:

Dear Member of Congress,

My name is Kevin Jennings, President of New York City's Tenement Museum. I am writing to invite you and your staff to visit the Tenement Museum at a time that conveniences you.

###

As you know, museums across the country play a key role in education. The Tenement Museum alone welcomes over 260,000 people, including 50,000 students, each year.

At the Museum, we educate our visitors through the real stories of migrant, immigrant and refugee families who built lives in the Lower East Side, from the 19th century to the present day. By entering the recreated homes of the ordinary families who lived in the Museum's historic tenement buildings at 97 and 103 Orchard St., visitors are able to see themselves in their stories and gain an appreciation for the vital role immigrants played and continue to play in shaping the American identity.

As a Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, we would very much welcome you and your staff to the Tenement Museum: at a time when the issue of immigration is much misunderstood by the public and even maligned, we feel the education we provide is more important than ever.

Indeed, we recently received the final evaluation report for our newest permanent exhibition, Under One Roof, which is our first to explore modern immigration. In the report, one visitor reflected on the perspective the exhibit provided in light of our current national discourse around immigration: "when I hear people talking about how immigration has 'traditionally' been or has always been, it just seems to reveal that we don't actually know that much about our own history."

I look forward to welcoming you to The Tenement Museum. Please feel free to reach out at kjennings@tenement.org or 646-518-3022 to make arrangements for you (and your staff) to visit the museum.

Sincerely,

Kevin Jennings,

President, Tenement Museum.

About the Tenement Museum

At a time when immigration is at the center of our national conversation, the Tenement Museum is more relevant than ever. Since 1988, the Museum has forged emotional connections between visitors and immigrants past and present, through educator-led tours of its historic tenement buildings at 97 and 103 Orchard and the surrounding neighborhood, enhancing appreciation for the vital role immigrants play in shaping the American identity. The Museum has become one of New York City's preeminent cultural and educational institutions, welcoming more than 238,000 visitors, including 55,000 students, each year. The Museum now aims to use every medium at its disposal to dramatically increase the impact of its programming—reaching millions not thousands-- with its message of how immigrants built and continue to build America.

###