



**PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
KEVIN M. BYRNE**

May 11, 2023

Honorable Eric Adams  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams,

As Putnam County Executive, I write to you with great concern over the recent announcement of your plans to shelter asylum seekers and other migrants in Hudson Valley communities. The news of your actions has caused outrage, fear, and confusion throughout the region. While I appreciated your virtual call with county and local leaders earlier today, it was clearly a reactionary step to overwhelming opposition in the face of what I would describe as an underhanded move. In your call, you mentioned that you're asking for assistance, and you don't want to force this move on anyone, but clearly that was not true a few weeks ago. You sought to house these individuals by having the City contract with various hotels and other temporary residency facilities without first giving adequate notice to Orange or Rockland Counties. Seeing as local communities have received little or no notice of these plans and there has been no real coordination or information about the specifics of these individuals, I cannot endorse such a move. This notwithstanding, I want to be clear that I do not place blame on you or your administration for the genesis of the crisis our entire nation faces.

With the expiration of Title 42 today, the situation at the southern border will likely exponentially worsen without a comprehensive federal strategy. I understand that this humanitarian crisis is not of your making, but you have chosen to take on this responsibility. Putnam County has not. The people of Putnam County implore you to communicate to President Biden our deep concerns and demand he take action to address the issue at its source. The federal government must secure our border and should fix the asylum review process to help relieve the enormous backlog of cases in the courts. Individuals should not have to wait months or years without guidance or a path forward, and the communities they reside in should not be put in the situation of having to endlessly provide care and services for them, including your city.

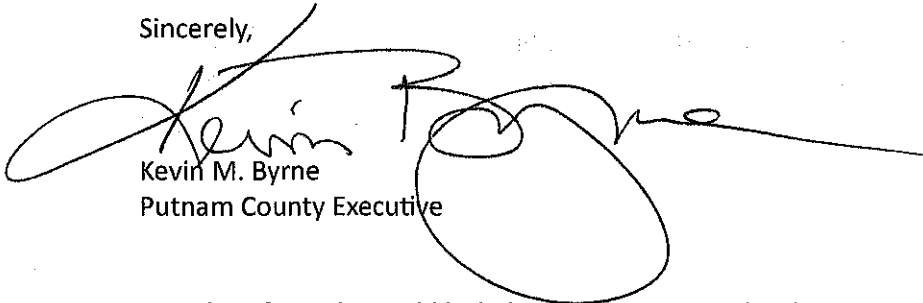
The President's inaction to date is completely unacceptable, especially given that he was just in the region yesterday to fundraise and failed to address this tinderbox of a situation that New Yorkers and many of our fellow Americans face. Our country has never faced a situation such as this. The migrant crisis we find ourselves in is inherently different from other situations in recent memory like the Syrian refugee crisis and the Afghanistan retreat debacle. Obviously, this is a significantly larger number of individuals we're dealing with, but also in those other two cases, asylum applicants were held in a different country while their applications were evaluated.

While I understand and empathize with your desire to help these individuals, you must understand that your actions to date have undermined these migrants' cause. By attempting to effectively establish homeless shelters throughout the region, the City is creating far more problems than it solves. When these asylum seekers are relocated to our communities without proper support and connections, they become vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking, and criminal activity. You should know that our Putnam County Sheriff's office has been and will continue to be committed to working and communicating with federal law enforcement officials, including Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE), to ensure the safety of these individuals and our communities. It is worth reiterating that while Putnam County is a caring and welcoming county, it continues to support the **rule of law** and is not a "sanctuary county".

Absent a shared services agreement with our County to assist in providing wrap around services, we cannot in good faith endorse or allow you to move forward with these half-baked plans.

Alternatively, should you seek my assistance in lobbying President Biden and the U.S. Congress to secure our nation's border as well as properly vet and process the surge of asylum seekers, I remain willing and able.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin M. Byrne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end. It is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kevin M. Byrne  
Putnam County Executive

PS. A lot of people would lack the courage to organize that more recent video call and take the time to answer all those questions. For that, know that you have my respect and thanks.

Cc: President Joseph Biden  
Governor Kathy Hochul  
Senator Charles Schumer  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
Congressman Michael Lawler (NY17CD)