

December 16, 2025

Dear Gresham,

I want to speak to you plainly and from the heart.

Like many of you, I am carrying a mix of emotions. I've listened carefully to the public comments. I've felt the tension in our community. I've heard anger, and I've sensed the fear. I know that for many families, this moment feels uncertain and deeply personal.

I see neighbors worrying about neighbors.

I see parents holding their children a little closer.

I see kids wondering if their families will still be whole when they come home from school.

And I see a system — federal, state, and local — struggling to keep up with the complexity of the moment we are living in.

As mayor of Gresham, and as someone who stepped into leadership during a very difficult period in our nation's history, I know this much to be true: leadership isn't about pretending things are simple. It's about telling the truth, even when it's hard, and choosing steadiness over fear.

We are a nation of laws.

And we are a nation of immigrants.

These two ideas are not enemies. They are part of the same American story. But they demand a system that is thoughtful, compassionate, and responsible — one that recognizes our shared humanity while also insisting on accountability.

Here in Gresham, we are doing our part.

Working alongside my colleagues on the City Council, we have taken steps to bring clarity at the local level while continuing to call for real action from the state and federal government. Broad, indiscriminate actions from far away do not make communities safer. Too often, they create confusion, fear, and harm for people who are simply trying to live their lives, work hard, and care for their families.

Oregon is a sanctuary state. That is the law. Voters across the state affirmed it, and voters here in Gresham did as well. That decision is not what we are debating today. The people have spoken.

The question before us now is this: how do we move forward together? How do we keep Gresham safe, united, and true to both the law and our values?

In the days ahead, city leadership and the City Council will share updates, and information. Our goal is simple — to provide clarity, transparency, and a sense of steadiness during an unsettled time. We are

carefully weighing every option to ensure Gresham remains a safe, welcoming city that operates within the law.

I ask for patience. I ask for grace.

We did not arrive at this moment overnight, and we will not find our way through it overnight. But we will move forward — thoughtfully, carefully, and together.

Gresham has always been a close-knit city. A city built by people who showed up, rolled up their sleeves, and believed that if you worked hard and treated people right, you could build a good life here. People came from everywhere to do just that. And when others closed doors, Gresham often chose to open them.

That spirit is part of who we are.

It reminds me of a line from scripture that has stayed with me:

*"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."*

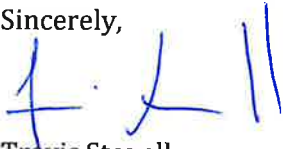
In the end, there are things we know for certain. Congress must do the hard work of fixing a broken immigration system that has been neglected for decades. We know that violent criminals — no matter who they are — do not belong in any community. And we know that when we stand together as one Gresham, we are stronger, safer, and more resilient.

This is a hard moment. But it is also a moment that calls us to be our best — calmer, kinder, and more resolved.

I believe in this community. I believe in our people. And I believe that, in time, steady leadership, clear eyes, and grace will carry us where we need to go.

And grace will lead us home.

Sincerely,



Travis Stovall

Mayor of Gresham, Oregon