

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chairman Richard Shelby  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Room S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Room S- 128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 13, 2019

Dear Senator McConnell, Senator Schumer, Senator Shelby, Senator Leahy, Representative Pelosi, Representative McCarthy, Representative Lowey, and Representative Granger,

The undersigned 230 racial justice, immigrant rights, humanitarian, good governance, and faith-based organizations write today to ask that you reject the White House's request for additional funding for detention and border militarization. This request, which comes only ten weeks after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) received significant funding increases in the final Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) appropriations and the administration misappropriated billions for border wall construction, would only exacerbate harms to immigrant communities and continue to divest taxpayer dollars from critical social programs that increase our collective well-being.

Despite being cloaked in the language of humanitarian aid, the funding sought for ICE and CBP would instead increase human suffering by ensuring more people are detained in inhumane conditions, blocked from accessing due process, and criminalized through politically motivated prosecutions. In fact, comparing harmful, anti-immigrant policies to real humanitarian aid is an insult to the communities and organizations that are actually offering this support all across our country every single day. In stark contrast to this community solidarity, the Department of Justice under this Administration has criminalized real community-based assistance, infamously bringing charges last year against No More Deaths volunteers who were providing basic humanitarian assistance like water and food.<sup>1</sup>

The Trump administration's total request for \$4.5 billion would span the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Justice (DOJ), Defense (DOD) and Health and Human Services (HHS). This funding request is not about true solutions, but rather a deeply cynical move by an Administration that has continually shown callousness toward immigrant suffering, recklessly expanded detention infrastructure, and widened the deportation pipeline by reaching deep into communities and workplaces to target unprecedented numbers of people in the interior of the country.

We raise particular concern about the following components of the request:

- \$342 million to grow the immigration incarceration system, despite a long track record of abuse and negligence within ICE's jails, including recent deaths,<sup>2</sup> insufficient medical care,<sup>3</sup> a rise in the number of detained women enduring miscarriages,<sup>4</sup> and sham inspections that breed impunity.<sup>5</sup>
- \$82 million to expand the notorious Dilley Family Detention Center,<sup>6</sup> allowing DHS to jail nearly 1,000 more parents and children in family jails each day. DHS's own medical experts have used whistleblower protections to warn that the continued use of family detention puts children's lives and wellbeing at risk.<sup>7</sup> Any continued use of these facilities, not to mention expansion, is unconscionable.

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<sup>1</sup> *They left food and water for migrants in the desert. Now they might go to prison*; January 20, 2019; Washington Post; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/01/20/they-left-food-water-migrants-desert-now-they-might-go-prison/?utm\\_term=.0629f716c1e1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/01/20/they-left-food-water-migrants-desert-now-they-might-go-prison/?utm_term=.0629f716c1e1)

<sup>2</sup> *An immigration detainee fell into a coma and died at 27. His family wants to know why*; April 10, 2019; Los Angeles Times; <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-adelanto-detainee-death-20190410-story.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *There's Just One Medical Doctor at Immigration Detention Facility in Aurora*; March 8, 2019; Westworld; <https://www.westworld.com/news/theres-just-one-medical-doctor-for-detainees-at-immigration-facility-in-aurora-11246966>.

<sup>4</sup> *Immigrant Miscarriages in ICE Detention Have Nearly Doubled Under Trump*; March 1, 2019; Daily Beast; <https://www.thedailybeast.com/immigrant-miscarriages-in-ice-detention-have-nearly-doubled-under-trump>.

<sup>5</sup> *ICE's Inspections and Monitoring of Detention Facilities Do Not Lead to Sustained Compliance or Systemic Improvements*; DHS Office of Inspector General; June 26, 2018; <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2018-06/OIG-18-67-Jun18.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> *As Trump eyes more family detention, experts say it puts kids at risk*; April 24, 2019; Public Radio International; <https://www.pri.org/stories/2019-04-24/trump-eyes-more-family-detention-experts-say-it-puts-kids-risk>.

<sup>7</sup> *Whistle-Blowers Say Detaining Migrant Families 'Poses High Risk of Harm'*; July 18, 2019; The New York Times; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/18/us/migrant-children-family-detention->

- \$273 million for CBP detention centers to hold families. The request includes funding for CBP processing centers, used to hold families along the border. The “hielera” centers are known for deplorable conditions and abuses,<sup>8</sup> leading to children dying in custody. CBP should be moving away from detaining migrant children, and funds should be directed towards alternative housing programs, rather than giving more funds for guards and equipment for inherently dangerous facilities.
- \$377 million for border militarization and harmful surveillance. The request includes an increase in funding for “Operation Guardian,” a joint operation opposed by many state leaders<sup>9</sup> that utilizes the National Guard to support CBP, furthering the militarization of the border to the detriment of humanitarian efforts underway. Funding is also requested for increased surveillance and intelligence support for CBP, including new technology to process and “track migrants in CBP custody.” The increase in surveillance technology raises serious concern in the wake of growing scandals involving spying and harassment of journalists and lawyers at the border<sup>10</sup> and DHS monitoring of family separation protests.<sup>11</sup> It’s also concerning given the existing lack of privacy protections and the extent to which this surveillance could supercharge existing immigration enforcement.
- \$15 million to expand ICE programming billed as “counter-smuggling” but used under this Administration to target sponsors of unaccompanied children. Newly released FOIA documents demonstrate the extent to which CBP and ICE are using funds earmarked for human smuggling and trafficking to disrupt the reunification of unaccompanied children with their families; one recently uncovered document,<sup>12</sup> for example, describes a “smuggling disruption initiative,” which led to the arrest of more than 400 people between June and August of 2017 who were targeted after coming forward to sponsor unaccompanied children, with devastating effects including coercion, misrepresentation, and circumvention of due process rights, and permanent separation of families.<sup>13</sup>
- \$155 million for DOJ U.S. Marshals to allow for more prosecutions of migration-related offenses, including for many people seeking asylum. The request would increase funding for the U.S. Marshals to detain individuals for migration related offenses, including

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[doctors.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=second-column-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news](#)

<sup>8</sup> *Challenging Unconstitutional Conditions in CBP Detention Facilities; Doe v. Nielsen*, No. 15-00250 (D. Ariz. filed June 8, 2015; American Immigration Council; <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/litigation/challenging-unconstitutional-conditions-cbp-detention-facilities>.

<sup>9</sup> *Unlike Neighboring States Ducey to Keep National Guard in Arizona*; February 13, 2019; Arizona Daily Star; [https://tucson.com/news/local/unlike-neighboring-states-ducey-to-keep-national-guard-at-arizona/article\\_42dcac56-2311-5502-ab6a-7c57e798838e.html](https://tucson.com/news/local/unlike-neighboring-states-ducey-to-keep-national-guard-at-arizona/article_42dcac56-2311-5502-ab6a-7c57e798838e.html).

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Wyden of the Senate Finance Committee to CBP Commissioner McAleenan; March 11, 2019; <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Wyden-Grassley%20Letter%20to%20CBP%20re%20journalists.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> *Homeland Security Used a Private Intelligence Firm to Monitor Family Separation Protests*; April 29, 2019; The Intercept; <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/29/family-separation-protests-surveillance/>.

<sup>12</sup> Documents Detail ICE Campaign to Prosecute Migrant Parents as Smugglers; April 29, 2019; The Intercept; <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/29/ice-documents-prosecute-migrant-parents-smugglers/>.

<sup>13</sup> *To Free Detained Children, Immigrant Families Are Forced to Risk Everything*; October 16, 2018; The New Yorker; <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/to-free-detained-children-immigrant-families-are-forced-to-risk-everything>.

criminal prosecution for “illegal entry” or “illegal re-entry,” which are the most prosecuted federal crimes and weigh down the entire legal system despite the administration’s policies forcing many people to cross without authorization to seek asylum protection. Through programs such as “Operation Streamline,” the administration has ratcheted up illegal-entry prosecutions along the southwest border districts, and used the increase in prosecutions to criminalize migration and demonize immigrant communities.

The Trump administration demonstrates daily that its approach to migration is rooted in hate and cruelty. This request is just the latest attempt to grab funds outside of the normal budget process to expand a punitive deterrent-oriented system, without any plan in place to actually address the human needs of refugees arriving at our border fleeing well-documented human rights abuses. Congress should reject further divestment from our communities and instead support community responses that welcome asylum seekers and migrants.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus

Advocates for Youth

African Americans Ministers In Action

Alianza Americas

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

American Friends Service Committee

Americans for Immigrant Justice

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

ASISTA

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)

Athlete Ally

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore

Bridges Faith Initiative

Center for American Progress

Center for Constitutional Rights

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center For Popular Democracy

Center for Victims of Torture

Center on Privacy and Technology at Georgetown Law

Church World Service

Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic)

Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces

CREDO

Defending Rights & Dissent

Detention Watch Network

Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Dominicans of Sinsinawa

Earthjustice

Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)

Faith in Action

Faith in Public Life

Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA)

Franciscan Action Network

Freedom for Immigrants

Freedom Network USA  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Hispanic Federation  
Hope Border Institute  
Immigrant Defense Project  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Immigration Equality Action Fund  
Immigration Hub  
Indivisible  
Japanese American Citizens League  
JASS (Just Associates)  
Jobs With Justice Education Fund  
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart  
LA RED, Faith in Action  
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
MoveOn  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Employment Law Project  
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center

National Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala/NISGUA  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)  
NYU Immigrant Rights Clinic  
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Pax Christi USA  
Project South  
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator  
Pueblo Sin Fronteras  
Rabbinical Assembly  
RAICES  
Sierra Club  
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy South Central  
Sisters of ST. Francis Justice, Peace and Care for Creation Cmmittee  
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center  
Southern Border Communities Coalition  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Tula's Indivisible Critical Response Team  
Ujima Inc: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community  
UndocuBlack Network

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Methodist Women  
United We Dream  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Win Without War  
Women's Refugee Commission

### **State and Local Organizations**

ACLAMO  
Advocate Visitors with Immigrants in Detention in the Chihuahuan Desert  
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.  
AFSC Colorado  
Al Otro Lado  
Alliance San Diego  
American Gateways  
Angry Tías and Abuelas of the RGV  
APANO  
Arab American Association of New York  
Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors  
Asian American/Pacific Islander Christians for Social Justice  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - LA  
Asian Law Alliance  
Beyond Borders-Sin Fronteras, First Parish in Cambridge Unitarian Universalist  
Border Patrol Victims Network



Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC, Inc.  
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition  
Casa Esperanza  
Catholic Charities of West TN  
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) DC  
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos: The United Workers Center  
Chhaya Community Development Corporation  
Chicago Religious Leadership Network On Latin America - CRLN  
CIYJA  
Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist  
CPC - Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.  
CT Shoreline Indivisible  
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
DC-MD Justice For Our Neighbors  
Detained Migrant Solidarity Committee  
Dominican Sisters of Houston  
Don't Separate Families  
End Streamline Coalition  
Equality California  
Equality North Carolina  
Erie Neighborhood House  
Eva Mayhabal Davis, UNLOCAL, INC.  
Faith In Action Bay Area  
Faith in Indiana  
Faith in New York  
Faith in NJ  
Florida Asian Services

Franciscans for Justice  
Freedom House Detroit  
Fuerza Del Valle Workers center  
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas  
Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Immigrant Allies of Marshalltown  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center  
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice  
Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)  
Inter-faith Coalition on Immigration  
Interfaith Action for Human Rights  
International Institute of New England  
International Institute of the Bay Area  
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
ISLA  
Jefferson County immigrants Rights Advocates  
Justice For Our Neighbors East Texas  
Kino Border Initiative  
La Resistencia  
LALMA/La Asociación Latino-Musulmana de America  
Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Make the Road New Jersey  
Make the Road New York  
Massachusetts Communities Action Network

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project

Migrant Center for Human Rights

MinKwon Center for Community Action

Mississippi Center for Justice

Missouri Faith Voices, A Faith in Action Federation

Montana Women For...

Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee

National Lawyers Guild - DC Chapter

New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice

New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia

New York Immigration Coalition

NM Comunidades en Accion y de Fe (CAFe)

No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes

North County Immigration Task Force

North Georgia Immigrant Justice

Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

OCA South Florida Chapter

Ohio Immigrant Alliance

Open Immigration Legal Services

OutFront Minnesota

Pangea Legal Services

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

Pilgrim United Church of Christ  
Princeton Progressives  
Public Counsel  
Resilience Orange County  
RGV Equal Voice Network  
San Diego Border Dreamers  
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium  
Silver State Equality  
SIRAG (Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Action Group)  
SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network)  
Sisterhood of Salam/Shalom Takoma Park-Silver Spring Chapter  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
Southside Worker Center  
Southwest Environmental Center  
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)  
St. Luke United Methodist Church  
The Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project  
Together We're Indivisible Nevada  
United Valley Interfaith Project  
University of California, Los Angeles Department of Chicana & Chicano Studies  
University YMCA New American Welcome Center  
UnLocal, Inc.  
Vermont Interfaith Action  
Viola Katusiime  
Wallingford Indivisible  
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice