

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

February 23, 2024

Dear President Biden:

We, the undersigned 150+ international, national, state, local, and faith-based organizations, are deeply alarmed at [reports](#) that you may wield your executive power to further endanger asylum seekers and immigrant communities. After you declared your intent to “[shut down](#)” the southern border, members of the U.S. Senate voted on a supplemental funding bill this month that attempted to codify the most anti-asylum and anti-immigrant provisions seen in decades. The extremist immigration provisions in this bill failed to pass. Nevertheless, your administration has not relented in its embrace of policies mirroring the prior administration. We urge you to heed our warning: this tired approach failed under the past administration, will fail and cause great harm again, and will tarnish your administration irreparably.

Many of the changes you are reportedly contemplating would not only stain your legacy; they would undo your own efforts to adhere to U.S. and international asylum law, return refugees to harm, and create widespread [chaos and suffering](#) at the border. We implore you not to emulate your predecessor and extremist legislators.

On your first day in office, you rightly rescinded a number of abhorrent signature policies of your predecessor. These include the [Muslim and African bans](#) and a [proclamation](#) that sought to bar asylum access based on manner of entry. Yet, your office is reportedly considering using the same law underpinning these policies you rescinded to attempt to shut down access to asylum at the southern border. Other [reports](#) suggest you may try to unlawfully raise the standard for preliminary asylum screenings, which was similarly attempted by the prior administration, before facing litigation and [your rightful return](#) to the threshold required by Congress. These policies, as well as others that forced people seeking asylum to remain in Mexico, have damaged the United States’ reputation worldwide, had a devastating humanitarian impact and incurred significant [costs and risks](#), without yielding any of their desired outcomes. You cannot outdo your predecessor in engineering extreme policies, either by legislation or executive action.

Your first year in office restored much needed hope that U.S. border policies need not be defined by cruelty and punishment. Your recent comments and actions have marked a radical shift away from

such hope—leaving little daylight between your administration and others who demonize Black, Indigenous, and Brown people, including particularly vulnerable groups like women, children, and LGBTQ+ people. Instead, we urge you to consider the [many humane steps](#) your administration can take via executive action to restore faith in our immigration system while bringing order and fairness to the border. These include, but are not limited to: the critical resourcing of ports of entry, so that people seeking asylum can be processed humanely and without delays; ensuring support through coordination and resources for the many communities and organizations at the border and in the interior of the United States who welcome people seeking asylum and offer shelter, case management support, legal services, Indigenous language interpretation, and more; and increasing support for more pathways for migration, without restricting asylum.

These steps have been outlined and presented repeatedly to the White House and federal agencies by many of the undersigned organizations; we stand ready to meet with you to discuss and cooperate with you on implementation.

Sincerely,

National and international organizations:

#WelcomeWithDignity

Acacia Center for Justice

Afghans For A Better Tomorrow

African Communities Together (ACT)

Alianza Americas

America's Voice

American Friends Service Committee

Americans for Immigrant Justice

Amnesty International USA

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Law Caucus

ASISTA Immigration Assistance

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)

Avodah

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Black Alliance for Just Immigration

Borderlands Resource Initiative
Bridges Faith Initiative
Cameroon Advocacy Network
CASA
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition on Human Needs
Community for Children, Inc
Detention Watch Network
Faithful America
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom for Immigrants
Freedom Network USA
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Human Rights First
Human Rights Watch
Immigrant Justice Network
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigrants Act Now
Immigration Equality
Immigration Law & Justice Network
Innovation Law Lab
International Mayan League
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewtina y Co.
Just Detention International
Justice Action Center

Justice in Motion
Latin America Working Group
Lawyers for Good Government
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
MPower Change
Muslim Advocates
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
National Partnership for New Americans
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Oxfam America
People's Action
Physicians for Human Rights
Presente.org
Project Lifeline
RAICES
Rainbow Railroad
REACT DC
Refugee Congress
Refugees International
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Border Communities Coalition
SPLC Action Fund
Tahirih Justice Center

The Shalom Center
The Workers Circle
UndocuBlack Network
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Vera Institute of Justice
We Are All America (WAAA)
Witness at the Border
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

State and local organizations:

African Advocacy Network
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Alliance San Diego
American Gateways
'Angry Tias and Abuelas
Arise Adelante
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta
AVAN Immigrant Services
Bend the Arc Northern CA
Bend the Arc SoCal
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Maryland
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Pittsburgh
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action South Jersey
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ)
California Immigrant Policy Center
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF
Central American Resource Center- CARECEN- of California
Community EsTr(El/La)
Comunidad SOL

Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
El Calvario Community and Immigrant Advocacy Ctr
El Pueblo Unido of Atlantic City
Estrella del Paso (Formerly DMRS)
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Florida Policy Institute
Grassroots Leadership
Hope Border Institute
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equity
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Defense
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
Interfaith Welcome Coalition of San Antonio Texas
Jewish Community Action
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
Jewish Family & Community Service East Bay
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Just Neighbors
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Mariposa Legal, Program of COMMON Foundation
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Midwest Immigration Bond Fund
Mobile Pathways
National Lawyers Guild-Task Force on the Americas/San Francisco Bay Area chapter
New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
New Mexico Dream Team
New York Immigration Coalition
Oasis Legal Services

Pennsylvania Immigrant and Citizenship Coalition

Public Counsel

Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sur Legal Collaborative

Team Brownsville

Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors

The Advocates for Human Rights

The Sidewalk School

United African Organization

Voces Unidas RGV

Volunteer Lawyers for Justice

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Cc: Antony Blinken, Secretary, United States Department of State
Merrick Garland, Attorney General, United States Department of Justice
Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, United States Department of Homeland Security
Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor to the President
Neera Tanden, Domestic Policy Advisor to the President
Jeffrey Zients, White House Chief of Staff