

April 18, 2023

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Vote Recommendation Opposing Anti-Immigrant Bill in House Judiciary Markup

Dear Representative,

The undersigned **106** state, local, and national immigration, civil rights, public health, education, religious, labor, and other organizations write to respectfully request that you **VOTE NO** for the Border Security and Enforcement Act of 2023 in the House Judiciary Markup on April 19 that would harm immigrant communities. The newly elected majority is driving an intentionally divisive agenda to amplify anti-immigrant animus without moral and effective policy solutions. We ask you to oppose the anti-immigrant bill that would:

- **End or Restrict Asylum at the Border.** Bills seeking to restrict or end asylum would violate Democratic commitments to providing a fair asylum system and to standing with asylum seekers, immigrants, and communities of color. Such proposals include: implementing the failed Trump policy of Remain in Mexico (MPP), raising the credible fear standard, establishing unduly burdensome limits to asylum eligibility, and sealing off all borders and ports of entry to asylum seekers unless the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) meets the impossible condition of detaining or returning to Mexico all arriving asylum seekers and migrants. Bills that seek to restrict or end asylum violate our international obligations and will only sow chaos at the border, rather than ameliorating it. In addition, bills seeking to unilaterally expel asylum seekers to other countries without consulting the receiving country nor the migrant results in refoulement of the migrant to danger and potentially problematic foreign policy implications.
- **Mandate E-Verify.** Requiring E-Verify will harm the economy, as it will result in increased unemployment and labor shortages and cost businesses billions of dollars to implement. E-Verify will harm small businesses and lead to job loss and unemployment among citizens as well as noncitizens. National implementation of E-Verify raises efficiency, due process, and racial profiling concerns and decreased employment among Latinos, regardless of status.
- **Harm Unaccompanied Children.** Congress must reject any legislative efforts to eliminate or reduce protections for immigrant children in the 2008 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) or the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement (Flores) or to reduce government-funded legal representation for unaccompanied children. These protections are vital for children seeking safety, including survivors of violence. Flores and the TVPRA recognize that children are different from adults, and that immigrant children are uniquely vulnerable and at high risk for trauma, trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Flores and the TVPRA provide critical protections designed to ensure that unaccompanied children receive proper screening to determine if they are victims of or at risk of human trafficking, that their treatment in government custody aligns with basic child welfare principles, and to help them navigate a complex system largely designed for adults. Congress should increase protections and legal representation so that all immigrant children are safe and treated fairly.

- **Eliminate Parole Authority.** Parole is a valid, lawful mechanism under the federal immigration laws that expressly grants the Secretary of DHS discretion to allow non-citizens into the U.S. on a case-by-case basis for “urgent humanitarian reasons” or for a “significant public benefit.” The use of parole has been pivotal to protect thousands of non-citizens seeking humanitarian relief, including Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion who were paroled into the U.S. under the Uniting for Ukraine initiative and Afghan allies evacuated after the fall of Kabul. Bills that end parole are antithetical to a long and storied history of facilitating the welcome of U.S. allies from war torn regions. In addition, parole for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela presents an orderly process to ensure migrants can seek protection from the effects of political repression, natural disasters, and violence. Determinations for parole are individualized and consist of a multi-agency screening and vetting process. Parole should be protected as a vital authority for extending protection to the most vulnerable.

- **Detain Immigrants and Families.** Bills that seek to increase immigrant detention and deportations undermine public safety rather than increase it by destabilizing immigrant families and their communities. Detention has also been shown to lead to a host of negative outcomes, including mental health deterioration for asylum seekers, survivors of trauma, and children. Immigration detention is unnecessary to support compliance with court hearings or other agency-imposed obligations. It is imperative to stop the growth of immigration detention driven by the profits of the private prison industry, not sound policy.

- **Target Immigrants Compelled to Overstay their Visa.** The vast majority of nonimmigrant travelers to the US comply with the terms of their visas. Of the minority that overstay, many entered the U.S. for a lawful purpose such as business or education and many overstayed their visas due to family ties, employment, or to live in greater safety than in their home countries. The nexus to the situation on our borders and concerns about those who overstay their visas is dubious at best: those arriving on our southern border are seeking asylum, while individuals whose visas have expired are largely long-term residents in the U.S. Congress should focus on solutions that regularize the status of long-term residents by fixing our broken immigration system.

We urge you to vote in ways that protect immigrants and **VOTE NO** against the Border Security and Enforcement Act of 2023 in the upcoming markup in the House Judiciary Committee. We must oppose racist, xenophobic, unconstructive proposals that add fuel to hate and present no constructive and moral solutions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

#WelcomeWithDignity
 African American Ministers In Action
 African Communities Together (ACT)
 African Human Rights Coalition
 All* Above All Action Fund
 America’s Voice
 American Civil Liberties Union
 American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
 American Humanist Association

American Immigration Council
American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Bridges Faith Initiative
Cameroon Advocacy Network
Cameroonian Advocacy networks
CASA
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Coalition on Human Needs
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
Community Change Action
Detention Watch Network
Farmworker Justice
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom for Immigrants (FFI)
Freedom Network USA
Government Accountability Project
Haitian Bridge Alliance
HIAS
Human Rights First
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)
Immigration Hub
Justice Action Center
Justice in Motion
Latin American Working Group (LAWG)
Lawyers for Good Government
MomsRising
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
National Partnership for New Americans
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Oxfam America
People's Action
Physicians for Human Rights
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness
Save the Children
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team

Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
UFW Foundation
UndocuBlack Network
UnidosUS
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Farm Workers
Value our Families
Voice for Refuge Action Fund
Washington Office on Latin America
Witness at the Border
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

State and Local Organizations

ACLU People Power Fairfax
Al Otro Lado
Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta
Central America Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN-LA)
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc.
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
Fellowship Southwest
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Human Rights Initiative
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
Just Neighbors Ministry
Justice For Our Neighbors El Paso
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Migrant Center for Human Rights
North Carolina Justice Center
Oasis Legal Services
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Children's Partnership
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
YWCA of Kalamazoo Michigan