

We Will Organize Against the Senate Border Bill - Now and in the Future

Open Letter to President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris,

United We Dream and the undersigned 83 national, international, state and local organizations write to express our unwavering objection to the [Border Act of 2024 \(S.4361\)](#). Recently, some have touted this bill as a reasonable piece of policy, worthy of another chance for a vote in Congress. We write this letter to make it clear that we will not allow any elected leader to treat immigrants, whether new arrivals or those who have been here for decades, as political pawns. We will organize against this anti-immigrant Senate Border Bill and its violent implications for our communities now and in the future.

This bill has been defeated in the Senate twice and it would cause irreparable harm to our asylum system, our standing on the global stage and most importantly, it would cause countless deaths at our [borders](#) and [in other countries](#). Our asylum system is [under tremendous pressure](#), placed on it over the years, which must be viewed in the context of the continuing [global refugee crisis](#), caused by climate disasters and political instability, which the United States has played a hand in. It is not because of the people coming to seek refuge - but because of lack of resources and outdated policies that fail to address the current needs. The overwhelming majority of Americans want to see a fair, efficient, and humane immigration system that upholds people's freedoms and right to seek safety. Yet this border bill repeats decades of failed strategy and misguided policies that threaten our country's democratic values.

It is shameful that instead of investing in welcoming the most vulnerable people who seek safety and a better life, and who make our [country better](#) by [every measure](#), we'd suggest wasting our resources in [ineffectual, inefficient deterrence policies](#) that [harm and kill](#) these [same people](#). The efficient and fair border processes the American people desperately want do not equate to more border policies that block, bar, or punish people; they mean investing resources in ensuring families can stay together, reducing backlogs, making processes fair for all, and ensuring people have the opportunity to live, work, and thrive in the United States. We have a responsibility to receive asylum seekers and other migrants, because of [international law](#) and our [own asylum laws](#). But most importantly, because of our own values and abundant resources. Our policies should reflect the best versions of ourselves, one where we welcome immigrants and flex our power in a way that helps people - like so many in our [communities](#) are [already doing](#).

This bill would do the opposite:

- **Create unworkable and Dangerous New Title 42-like Authority:** This bill creates a new authority to easily shut down the border that can be invoked at any time that would block asylum for some vulnerable asylum seekers—*a dangerous tool in the hands of future administrations*. The new “trigger” to open and close the border will create chaos and incentivize cartels to rush the border when encounters decrease as well as tie the hands of the US government in future negotiations on trade and border with Mexico. This means the kidnapping, murder and sexual assault of vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants, mostly women and children, along the border would continue indefinitely.
- **Gut Asylum:** This bill limits access to asylum by creating a heightened standard and setting up rapid processing at the cost of due process, harming the most vulnerable asylum seekers fleeing

persecution. The bill requires asylum seekers be processed within 90 days, an impossible task for many. This means even more people would be denied their rightful claims and be deported back to their deaths.

- **Increased Detention and Deportation:** This bill is a huge expansion of border enforcement designed to bypass immigration courts and expedite deportations, increase detention capacity to 50,000 beds (the highest number of any administration), putting in place mass detention along the border along with an ICE slush fund for enforcement. Families at the border will be placed in rapid deportations. And this would create the capacity for interior detention and mass deportation as well.
 - The **\$6.3 billion CBP request** would add **over a thousand Border Patrol agents** to the already largest law enforcement agency in the country—which has an alarming record of misconduct and serious [abuses against immigrants](#) and misusing the [funding Congress appropriates](#). This means more encounters with vulnerable people who would be abused at the hands of CBP.
 - An additional **\$6 billion to ICE** would needlessly increase immigration detention despite current detention levels being the highest seen under the Biden administration with over **40,000 people already in violent and dehumanizing ICE detention**. This means more people would be mistreated and tortured at detention centers, and long-time US residents would be deported to countries they left decades ago, separated from their families and communities.
- This funding would create new, and misleadingly named, “community-based residential centers” that would lead to **a new form of family detention**, as well as bolster harmful surveillance, and facilitate the rapid deportations of migrants without due process after exercising their legal right to seek asylum. This means families being mistreated, children being cold and hungry in detention centers, unable to reach their loved ones and isolated from the legal help they need.

We will reject any plans now or in the future for any administration or Congress to bring this bill or any version of it back for a vote, no matter what relief might be attached, as our communities refuse to trade the lives of one group of migrants for another.

Sincerely,

#WelcomeWithDignity

A.Y.U.D.A. INC.

Acacia Center for Justice

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

American Gateways

Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center

Amnesty International USA

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Bend The Arc: Jewish Action Pittsburgh

Border Vigil of Eagle Pass

Borderlands Resource Initiative
Bridges Faith Initiative
CASA
Center for Children's Advocacy
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Victims of Torture
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF
Climate Refugees
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Comunidad Sol
Connecticut Fair Housing Center
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible Immigration Team
CT Shoreline Indivisible
CT Students for a Dream
Detention Watch Network
El Cavario Community and Immigration Advocacy Ctr
El Pueblo Unido of Atlantic City
Faith in New Jersey
First Friends of New Jersey & New York
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Hartford Deportation Defense
Hope Border Institute
Human Rights First
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Justice Network
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI)
Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
International Rescue Committee
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice
Kino Border Initiative
Lawyers for Good Government
Living United for Change in Arizona
Make the Road CT
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
National Partnership for New Americans
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children
New York Immigration Coalition
Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition
Northern NJSC
Nosotras CT
Oasis Legal Services
Presente.org
Refugees International
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC)
Sunrise Movement
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Tahirih Justice Center
The Advocates for Human Rights
UndocuBlack Network
United We Dream
Uniting for a Safe Inclusive Community - Manchester
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut
We Are All America (WAAA)
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Witness at the Border
Woori Juntos
Working Families Party
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights