



National Task Force to End
Sexual & Domestic Violence

December 19, 2023

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

Re: The Impact of Proposed Asylum and Immigration Policy Changes on Immigrant
Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Dear President Biden:

As the Steering Committee of the National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence (“NTF”), we represent national, Tribal, state, territorial, and local organizations working to end domestic violence and sexual assault, with a focus on the development, promotion, and implementation of effective public policy. Your administration and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have been key partners in the government’s progress toward addressing domestic violence and sexual assault. The Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS), the immigration subcommittee of the NTF, was enthusiastic about the creation of the Humanitarian, Adjustment, Removing Conditions, and Travel Documents (HART) Service Center earlier this year, to provide improved and more timely responses to the immigration petitions of survivors of gender-based violence including domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

We are writing to express our deep concern about recent proposals that are being reported which would make permanent changes to the U.S. immigration process that would drastically limit eligibility for asylum seekers and have a disproportionate impact on immigrant survivors of gender-based violence. This is contrary to your longstanding commitment to ending violence against women as well as promoting racial and gender justice and equity. We are urging your administration and Congress to reverse course and instead seek solutions that will address the challenges along our southern border while centering the humanity and legal rights of immigrants and survivors.

Every day, immigrant survivors arrive at our border having escaped unspeakable violence. Using funding negotiations to enact harmful policy changes is unconscionable

and sets a dangerous precedent. Not only would these proposed policies make immigrant survivors less safe, but they will also increase chaos, confusion, and cruelty along our southern border. **We agree with Homeland Security officials who have warned that the proposed immigration changes would have unintended consequences, potentially working against their intended goals and objectives. In their own words, one Homeland Security official said the proposals on the table “[would break the border](#).”** Raising the threshold fear standard, enacting a travel ban, putting a cap on asylum seekers, and expanding detention and expedited removal nationwide will do nothing to solve border security challenges. Instead, such policies will overwhelm the already strained resources along the border and pose significant logistical and operational challenges that further endanger immigrant survivors.

We acknowledge and appreciate your recent proclamation in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in which one of your commitments was to address gender-based violence in the United States and globally. **[In your own words](#): “We must never cease working to uphold the dignity and protect the rights of every person in this country and promote the protection of those same rights globally.”** We implore you to follow through and uphold your commitment. **In your efforts to eliminate gender-based violence, you must not leave immigrant survivors behind.** Asylum is a human right and a critical lifeline to immigrant survivors. Nothing is worth bargaining away their humanity, especially when these policies will have a disproportionate impact on Black, Brown, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ immigrant survivors experiencing intersecting oppressions, harm, and increased barriers to safety.

We are urging you to reverse course and reject attempts to condition the success of a supplemental national security funding package on harmful anti-immigrant policy proposals. Instead, we appeal to you to work collaboratively with Congress to push for real solutions rooted in our legal and ethical obligations to those seeking refuge from gender-based violence and persecution.

Sincerely,

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF)

Cc: Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Secretary, United States Department of Homeland Security
Jennifer Klein, Director, White House Gender Policy Council
Neera Tanden, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy & Director for Domestic Policy Council