

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20050

Dear President Biden:

We, the 130 undersigned faith organizations, write to you to express our grave concern regarding the [reports](#) of your administration considering reinstating family detention, an immoral and inhumane practice that was discontinued by your administration at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities in 2021. Detaining children and their parents is a cruel and unnecessary way to treat migrant families after their grueling experiences. Families do not need to be detained. Giving families the opportunity to continue their immigration proceedings surrounded by the support of their loved ones and community responds to the call to treat newcomers with respect and dignity; while improving the likelihood that they can meet their legal obligations.

We write to you as representatives from the faith community, a community rich with different stories and experiences rooted in migration and displacement. Many of our traditions regard hospitality to the newcomer as an exemplary way to live out our faith. While we may hold differing perspectives, we are all certain that seeking safety and protection for one's family is an essential right that should not be abridged.

Reinstating family detention and implementing the [proposed "Circumvention of Lawful Pathways" asylum rule](#) would have dire consequences. The harm that detention poses to families and children is well documented. Detention exposes families to [unnecessary mental and physical health risks](#), while exacerbating the traumatic experiences they fled from in their countries. Any amount of detention is harmful to [children](#). It may disproportionately impact [Black pregnant women](#). Worryingly, [solitary confinement](#) and [family separation](#) have been abused as methods to silence parents that speak out. Families have also not had adequate access to [legal counsel](#) in detention. The period of detaining families must never be repeated.

Because of commitments enshrined in [the Refugee Act of 1980](#), further outlined in [U.S. law](#), anyone with a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group can seek asylum, regardless of how they arrived in the U.S. The U.S. has an obligation to adhere to international and U.S. law on this matter. We're concerned that the proposed asylum rule may exacerbate the issues prevalent in detention, around access to counsel and due process. It's plain to see that these policies will sow confusion and instill fear.

The undersigned faith organizations urge your administration not to detain migrant families. We instead invite you to be inspired by the spirit of justice and mercy that runs throughout our collective faiths and stories. Policies should be guided from a place of compassion and concern for those who are on the margins, including migrants and asylum seekers—not from a place of fear and trepidation. We unequivocally believe in the unity of families, in all their forms, and call on your administration to be courageous and consider a dignified welcome for all. Faith in a better way forward compels us to advocate for humane border management and to believe that no matter what, families belong together.

We challenge this administration to be guided by the principles and power of empathy, competence, and accountability not only to Americans but to the world's most vulnerable people. Our foundational values and story as a nation of immigrants tell us there is greater strength in hospitality than in hostility.

Sincerely,

Accompaniment & Sanctuary Coalition Colorado Springs  
Adorers of the Blood of Christ, US Region JPIC office  
Adrian Dominican Sisters  
Ainsworth United Church of Christ  
American Friends Service Committee  
Asian Counseling and Referral Service  
ASIP Ministry Team, Bethesda Lutheran Church  
Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action  
Border Compassion  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Broadview Online Rosary  
Broadview Vigil Group  
Buddhist Peace Fellowship  
Cedar Hills UCC, Sanctuary Team chairman  
Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ  
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice  
Church of the Ascension  
Church Women United in New York State  
Church World Service  
Commission on Global Issues Srs. Of St. Dominic Caldwell, NJ  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Conventual Franciscan Friars of Our Lady of the Angels Province  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA  
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel  
Dominican Sisters of Hope  
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Faith Action  
Faith Action Network  
Faith Commons  
Fellowship Southwest  
First Congregational Church of SanJose  
First Congregational Church, UCC  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Portland, OR  
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston  
Franciscan Action Network

Franciscan Peace Center, Clinton, Iowa  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart  
Guadalupe Presbyterian Church, USA  
HIAS  
Holy Cross Ministries of Utah  
Holy Cross Sisters  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, JPIC - USA  
Holy Union Sisters US Province  
Hope Border Institute  
Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants  
Immigration Working Group, SWPA Synod, ELCA  
Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America  
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center  
Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants  
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity  
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio  
InterReligious Task Force on Central America  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
Joliet Franciscans  
Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.  
Khmer Maine  
Latino Field Ministries Coordinator  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Long Island Immigration Clinic/Sisters of St. Joseph  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area  
Madison Christian Community Sanctuary Committee  
Main Street Congregational UCC  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Medical Mission Sisters - Justice Office  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
Middle Church  
Middle Collegiate Church  
Motivation Motivates  
MPower Change  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
NC Synod, ELCA  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Mexico & El Paso Interfaith Power and Light  
Nigerian Center  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment

Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth  
Office of The Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie  
Order of Lutheran Franciscans  
Partnership for Earth Spirituality  
Pax Christi Austin  
Pedro Arrupe Jesuit Institute  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Presentation Sisters, San Francisco, CA  
Profiles in Catholicism  
Quixote Center  
Raj Khalsa Gurdwara, Sikh Temple of Sterling  
Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants  
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership  
Sisters of Charity of New York  
Sisters of Charity, BVM  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy Solidarity Committee  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA  
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia  
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi  
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA  
Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth  
Sisters of the Holy Names. of Jesus and Mary, U.S.-Ontario Province  
Sisters of the Humility of Mary  
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood  
Social Justice Coalition  
Society of Helpers  
Southwestern Texas Synod ELCA  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry  
The Church Lab  
The Episcopal Church  
The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society  
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice

United Church Outreach Ministry

United Methodist Churches of Indiana

University Lutheran Church and Student Center

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County, San Juan, TX

Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration

Wider Church Ministries Team, Central Pacific Conference, UCC