

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Decreasing enforcement funding in FY 2019 DHS Appropriations bill

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to reduce funding for this administration's harmful border militarization and immigration enforcement policies. Any increase in funding will facilitate family separations, cause irreparable harm to the border region, and incentivize mass detention and deportation—policies that tear apart the fabric of our families and communities.

Instead of passing a full-year spending bill for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) when the continuing resolution expires on December 7th, we ask that you pass a clean, short-term continuing resolution for DHS. Specifically we seek a continuing resolution without border wall funds that add to the more than \$2 billion spent by this Congress on border barrier construction and without extra enforcement funds that allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to continue to overspend on beds and agents. Please do not reward the agencies responsible for harmful policies that pay no heed to border communities' quality of life and traumatize migrant and citizen children as well as their families.

We cannot treat funding for immigration detention and enforcement or border wall construction like business as usual. This administration forcibly took more than 2,600 children from their parents at the border last spring. Over ninety days have passed since a court deadline to reunite these families and, still, over 50 children remain separated from their families. Any increase in funding for DHS for another fiscal year while children remain separated and while the administration contemplates turning refugee families away from the border on the basis of nationality is tantamount to absolving this administration's despicable actions.

Furthermore, by terminating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for hundreds of thousands of people, the administration is engaging in yet another type of family separation policy. Congress has the ability to promote clean, permanent solutions for these communities outside of negotiations on DHS appropriations. These communities are not bargaining chips to be used in appropriations conversations that would include provisions that tear apart families and loved ones, including those who have lived in the United States for decades and have U.S. citizen family members. ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents have daily abused their power in this Congress, especially in communities of color, ignoring oversight, evading accountability and misusing taxpayer funds.

We specifically ask you to reject *all* funding for President Trump's border wall, including funding for new and expanded border fencing, barriers, levee walls, and conversion of vehicular to pedestrian barriers, in the FY 2019

appropriations process or other legislative vehicles. Border walls divide communities and tribal nations, cut through sensitive ecosystems, devastate the environment, threaten wildlife, eviscerate the rights of private property owners, cause catastrophic flooding, and contribute to thousands of migrant deaths. The Senate FY 2019 DHS appropriations bill contains \$1.6 billion for wall funding—resources that would irremediably wall off virtually all of south Texas’ Rio Grande Valley. The \$5 billion for border wall contained in the House FY 2019 DHS appropriations bill would cause even more harms to border residents’ homes, public lands and communities, not to mention American values. *Any of these funds sought for the border wall is harmful and unnecessary.*

Given the border wall’s profound impacts, we implore you to do everything in your power to conduct urgently-needed oversight of the billions of border wall dollars identified by the Government Accountability Office as lacking cost-benefit and effectiveness analysis. Instead of wasting hard-earned taxpayer dollars on a costly and unnecessary wall, this funding could be used instead to improve schools, roads, and health clinics that communities in the border region and across the country desperately need. When deciding how to spend taxpayer funds in the southern border region, we urge you to do what DHS refuses to: consult with local leaders who know the needs of their communities.

In addition to our concerns about the harmful impacts of a wall on the border region, we are worried that money appropriated for that purpose could be reprogrammed to pay for other cruel and destructive policies that cost more than Congress is willing to appropriate. In essence, the billions of dollars earmarked for a wall could quickly become a piggy bank for unilateral administration policies such as jailing children. We have seen ICE abuse its transfer and reprogramming authority by ushering \$200 million from other parts of DHS into its detention and removal apparatus.

ICE has also failed to comply with many reporting requirements from the FY 2018 appropriations bill, continues to expand detention capacity by spending beyond its appropriated dollars, and has doubled-down on problematic contracting mechanisms already flagged by DHS’s own Inspector General. In recent weeks, ICE has discretionarily detained an average of 2,000 more individuals per day than the 40,500 average population for which they have appropriated funds. Any increase in funding at this time would be rewarding the agency for a continued and egregious pattern of fiscal mismanagement.

The undersigned organizations are united in fighting for immigrant and border communities and want clean, permanent solutions that do not tear our families apart, harm loved ones or undercut other community members. We call on you to demonstrate bold leadership and work to re-align federal spending with our shared values of dignity, fairness and common-sense.

Signed,

ACLU

Al Otro Lado

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

Alianza Americas

Alliance San Diego

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Amnesty International USA
Animal Welfare Institute
Arkansas United Community Coalition
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Austin Region Justice for Our Neighbors
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC, Inc.
CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
CASA
Causa Oregon
Center for American Progress
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Community Change
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Victims of Torture
Central American Legal Assistance
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN-LA)
Chispa
Church of Our Saviour/La Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador
Church World Service
CLASP

Coalición de Derechos Humanos
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights - CHIRLA
Coalition on Human Needs
Colibri Center for Human Rights
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado People's Alliance
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Comunidades Unidas / Communities United
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas
COPAL- Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina
CREDO
Defenders of Wildlife
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Democratic Moms of Camarillo
Detained Migrant Solidarity Committee
Detention Watch Network
DMV Sanctuary Congregation Network
Drug Policy Alliance
Earth Care
Earthjustice
El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos
End Streamline Coalition
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center
Erie Neighborhood House
Esperanza Community Housing Corporation

Essex County Community Organization (ECCO)

Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)

Faith In Action Bay Area

Faith in Indiana

Faith In New York

Farmworker Justice

First Friends of NJ & NY

Florida Immigrant Coalition

Franciscan Action Network

Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement

Freedom for Immigrants-Chihuahuan Desert

Freedom House Detroit

Friends of Broward Detainees

Frontera de Cristo

Fuerza del Valle

Granite State Organizing Project

Great Old Broads for Wilderness

GreenLatinos

HIAS Pennsylvania

Hispanic Federation

Hope Border Institute/Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza

Human Rights First

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Immigrant Defense Project

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Immigrant Legal Resource Center

Immigration Hub

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Indivisible

Indivisible Conejo

Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ)

International Institute of the Bay Area

InterReligious Task Force on Central America & Colombia

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Japanese American Citizens League

Jobs With Justice

Junta for Progressive Action

Justice Strategies

Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Kino Border Initiative

Klamath Forest Alliance

LA RED, a program of Faith in Action

La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)

Latin America Working Group (LAWG)

Latin American Coalition

Latino Policy Forum

League of Conservation Voters

Legal Aid Justice Center

Leo Baeck Temple

Lower Columbia Hispanic Council

Maine People's Alliance

Make the Road Connecticut

Make the Road Nevada

Make the Road New Jersey

Make the Road NY

Make the Road Pennsylvania

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Mi Familia Vota

Michigan United

Migrant Center for Human Rights

Migrant Justice / Justicia Migrante

Missouri Faith Voices

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

National Center for Lesbian Rights

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 of the National Lawyers Guild

National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)

National Juvenile Justice Network

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

National Partnership for New Americans

National Wildlife Refuge Association

Nebraska Appleseed

Nevada Paralegal Center LLC

New Energy Economy

New Hampshire Alliance for Immigrant Rights

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

New York Immigration Coalition

NM Comunidades en Acción y de Fe (CAFe)

North County Immigration Task Force

Northern Jaguar Project

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

NY4WHALES

Ohio Immigrant Alliance

OneAmerica

Our Family Coalition

Our Revolution New Mexico & Frack Free Four Corners

OutFront Minnesota

Pangea Legal Services

Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

People's Action

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste

Political Asylum Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project

Progressive Leadership Alliance for Nevada

Promise Arizona

Quixote Center

Rachel's Network

Reformed Church of Highland Park

Rio Grande International Study Center

Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network

Rio Grande Valley Unofficial Coalition

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)

Sierra Club

Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Leadership Team

Somos Un Pueblo Unido

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

South Texas Human Rights Center

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Southern Border Communities Coalition

Southern California immigration Project

Southern Poverty Law Center

Southwest Environmental Center

St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church, Tucson

Stand Up America

Sunflower Community Action

Tahirih Justice Center

Taos Immigrant Allies

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

Texas Organizing Project

Thai Community Development Center

The Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans

The New York Immigration Coalition

The Resurrection Project

The Shared Earth Foundation

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Together Colorado, Member of Faith in Action

Transformations CDC

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

UndocuBlack Network

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)

United for a Fair Economy, UFE

United We Dream

UnLocal, Inc.

URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

Vermont Interfaith Action

Voces de la Frontera

Voices for Progress

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Wilco Family Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)

Wildlands Network

Wind of the Spirit, Immigrant Resource Center

Workers Defense Project