

Exhibit A

1 Blaine Bookey (SBN 267596)
 Neela Chakravartula (SBN 254746)*
 2 Kate Jastram (SBN 127625)
 Karen Musalo (SBN 106882)
 3 Anne Peterson (SBN 258673)*
 CENTER FOR GENDER & REFUGEE STUDIES
 4 200 McAllister Street
 San Francisco, CA 94102
 5 Telephone: (415) 565-4877
 Fax: (415) 581-8824
 6 *bookeybl@uchastings.edu*
neela@uchastings.edu
 7 *musalok@uchastings.edu*
jastramkate@uchastings.edu
 8 *petersonanne@uchastings.edu*

Christine Lin (SBN 239266)
 CGRS-California
 200 McAllister Street
 San Francisco, CA 94102
 Telephone: (415) 565-4877
 Fax: (415) 581-8824
linc@uchastings.edu

9 *Not admitted in this Court

10 Attorneys for Amici Curiae

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 12 **IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
 13 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**
 14 **SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION**

16 East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, *et al.*,

17 *Plaintiffs,*

18 v.

19 William P. Barr, *et al.*,

20 *Defendants.*

CASE NO.: 3:19-CV-04073-JST

**BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATIONS AND LAW SCHOOL
 CLINICS IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS’
 MOTION TO CONSIDER
 SUPPLEMENTAL EVIDENCE AND
 RESTORE THE NATIONWIDE SCOPE
 OF THE INJUNCTION**

IMMIGRATION ACTION

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INTRODUCTION AND INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE

This brief explains why this Court was correct to enjoin the third country asylum rule and why anything other than a nationwide injunction will cause substantial harm to the Plaintiffs and to thousands of migrants in desperate need of protection.

The current Administration has displayed a singular focus over the last two years—to dismantle the U.S. asylum system by executive fiat in circumvention of the law and constitutionally mandated separation of powers. Its previous attempts to thwart the will of Congress and slam the United States’ doors on the persecuted have rightly been blocked by the courts, including this one. *See, e.g., E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Trump*, 349 F. Supp. 3d 838 (N.D. Cal. 2018) (enjoining rule banning asylum for individuals who cross the border outside a port of entry); *O.A. v. Trump*, No. 18-2838, 2019 WL 3536334 (D.D.C. Aug. 2, 2019) (same); *J.O.P. v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, No. GJH-19-1944, 2019 WL 3536786 (D. Md. Aug. 2, 2019) (enjoining policy stripping unaccompanied children from having their claims first heard in a non-adversarial setting); *Grace v. Whitaker*, 344 F. Supp. 3d 96 (D.D.C. 2018) (enjoining policy categorically foreclosing protection to certain groups of asylum seekers in expedited removal), *appeal docketed*, No. 19-5013 (D.C. Cir. Jan. 30, 2019). Its latest attempt to render ineligible for asylum individuals who transited through a third country before seeking protection at the southern border fared no better before this Court, which correctly enjoined the rule as inconsistent with existing asylum laws that only authorize sending asylum seekers to third countries in limited circumstances—where a Safe Third Country Agreement exists or the applicant is firmly resettled—to ensure “we do not deliver aliens into the hands of their persecutors.” *E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Barr*, 385 F. Supp. 3d 922, 958 (N.D. Cal. 2019).

If permitted to take effect, the rule will have severe consequences across the country, eliminating a critical form of protection with life or death consequences for people long recognized as meriting asylum and violating the United States’ treaty obligations to administer protection without discrimination and to avoid “in any manner whatsoever” returning individuals

1 to danger. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, art. 33, ¶ 1, 198 U.N.T.S. 150, 176
2 (July 28, 1951) (Refugee Convention).

3 Amici curiae¹ are twenty-four non-profit organizations and law school clinics that
4 represent asylum seekers across the country. Of the thousands of asylum seekers they represent, a
5 substantial portion of them sought safe haven at the U.S.-Mexico border and would be barred
6 from protection from having transited through a third country under the Administration's latest
7 unlawful attempt to eviscerate the U.S. asylum system as we have known it for the last four
8 decades. Amici thus have a strong interest in the scope of this Court's rightful injunction of this
9 unlawful policy; and in the proper application of federal laws to ensure they are applied uniformly
10 and afford the right to asylum protection as widely as Congress intended and the United States'
11 international obligations require.²

12 Amici respectfully urge this Court to issue a new nationwide injunction based on the
13 Plaintiffs' supplemented record to ensure uniform administration of our immigration statutes and
14 to stop this cruel and unlawful policy that strikes at the core of the United States' fundamental
15 values and longstanding laws.

16 ARGUMENT

17 **I. The Third Country Asylum Rule Would Eliminate Asylum for the Very People U.S. 18 **Laws Have Long Protected and Result in Refoulement of Bona Fide Refugees.****

19 Because this Court has already correctly concluded that the new rule is likely unlawful,
20 amici provide only a brief overview of the merits.³

21 Individuals seeking asylum at the United States' southern border are fleeing gender-based
22 violence, violence perpetrated by gangs, and politically, racially and religiously motivated

23 ¹ Amici are listed and described in the accompanying Motion for Leave to File this Amicus Brief.

24 ² The parties consent to this filing. Defendants' consent is contingent upon this brief being filed
25 today, August 19, 2019, and Defendants further reserve the right to raise challenges to the brief's
26 claims. No person or entity other than amici authored or contributed funds intended for its
preparation or submission.

27 ³ Amici agree with Plaintiffs' clear and cogent arguments, not repeated in this brief, regarding the
28 inconsistency between the rule and the Safe Third Country and firm resettlement statutory
provisions.

1 persecution, among other heinous acts. *See, e.g.*, Administrative Record (AR) 293-95. There are
2 many reasons asylum seekers fleeing this sort of violence are often unable to take a direct route to
3 the United States, including the exigent circumstances of their flight and the lack of visas that
4 would permit them to board a plane to the U.S. to seek asylum. The immigration agency and the
5 courts have recognized this reality—that asylum seekers may pass through multiple countries
6 while searching for refuge but continue on to the United States because they cannot find safety in
7 the transited countries, or because they wish to reunify with family in the United States. *See, e.g.*,
8 *Gulla v. Gonzales*, 498 F.3d 911, 917 (9th Cir. 2007); *Matter of Pula*, 19 I&N Dec. 467, 474
9 (B.I.A. 1987).

10 Since passage of the Refugee Act in 1980, these individuals have been eligible for asylum
11 so long as they satisfy the stringent burden of establishing they meet the definition of a refugee.
12 *See* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(42), 1158. The Administration aims to uproot Congress’ long held and
13 unambiguous intent regarding the scope of the United States’ asylum laws. Under the new rule,
14 asylum seekers who fail to apply for protection from persecution or torture in at least one country
15 before coming to the United States “shall be found ineligible for asylum,” subject to only limited
16 exceptions. 8 C.F.R. § 208.13(c)(4). This complete ban would eviscerate the U.S. asylum system,
17 stripping this life saving protection for all non-Mexican asylum seekers entering at the southern
18 border, who necessarily will have transited through a third country.

19 The practical effect of this rule would be to force asylum seekers to seek protection in
20 Mexico or Guatemala, which will undoubtedly result in U.S. violations of the duty of non-
21 refoulement wherever it is permitted to take effect. Refugee Convention, Article 33.1. News
22 outlets, human rights organizations, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and
23 the U.S. government have all documented the extreme dangers for migrants and shortcomings of
24 the asylum processes in both countries. *See, e.g.*, AR 636-37 (Wall Street Journal article); 700
25 (Reuters article), 703 (Human Rights First Factsheet), 721-24 (Amnesty International report).
26 Moreover, the rule violates the principle of non-discrimination found in Article 3 of the Refugee
27 Convention and the U.S. refugee protection system by precluding from asylum protection any
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1 non-Mexican fleeing persecution who is unable to enter by air, or sea, and therefore arrives at a
2 land port of entry. *See Bringas-Rodriguez v. Sessions*, 850 F.3d 1051, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 2017) (en
3 banc) (examining history of the Refugee Act leading to the “nondiscriminatory definition of
4 refugee”). In doing so, it clearly places cruel and manifestly unsafe obstacles in front of asylum
5 seekers traveling by land from non-contiguous countries. Like its previous policies intent on
6 eliminating the United States’ asylum system by decree, the Administration’s new rule is patently
7 unlawful in flagrant violation of the United States’ bedrock domestic and international obligations
8 to protect the persecuted.

9 **II. A Nationwide Injunction is Necessary to Avert the Grave Consequences of**
10 **Permitting Third Country Asylum Rule to Take Effect.**

11 The third country asylum rule will cause harm to asylum seekers and their representatives
12 across the country. To start, applying a different rule within the Ninth Circuit is not administrable
13 given that asylum seekers, in amici’s vast experience, often do not appear in the same jurisdiction
14 throughout the life of their case. Even though an asylum seeker may seek protection at a border
15 point within the Ninth Circuit, for example, she may be transferred to a detention center in New
16 Jersey and then, if able to secure release, end up before an immigration judge in Florida (and even
17 later move and change venue to California). Moreover, ensuring that asylum seekers moving
18 across jurisdictions have accurate information as to their eligibility for protection will be
19 extremely difficult, made exponentially more so for those without an attorney. As many courts
20 have recognized, asylum law, including its accompanying procedures, is one of the most complex
21 areas of U.S. law and availability of this protection should not be left to chance. Moreover,
22 offering asylum in one jurisdiction but denying that same life-saving protection in the rest of the
23 country violates the important principle of uniformity, as well as the United States’ domestic and
24 international obligations.

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CONCLUSION

Amici support the issuance of a nationwide injunction, and they respectfully request that the Court grant Plaintiffs’ request.

Dated: August 19, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Blaine Bookey

Blaine Bookey
Neela Chakravartula*
Anne Peterson*
Karen Musalo
Kate Jastram
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
UC Hastings College of the Law
200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Christine Lin
CGRS-California
200 McAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102
P: (415) 565-4877
F: (415) 581-8824

*Not admitted in this Court

Attorneys for Amici Curiae

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LIST OF AMICI

- Amnesty International
New York, New York
- Asylum Seeker Assistance Project
Washington, D.C.
- Catholic Charities, Immigrant and Refugee Services
New York, New York
- Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
San Francisco, California
- Centro Legal de La Raza
Oakland, California
- Community Justice Alliance
Sacramento, California
- Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
East Palo Alto, California
- Dolores Street Community Services
San Francisco, California
- HIAS
Silver Spring, Maryland
- Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
Dallas, Texas
- Immigrant Legal Defense
Oakland, California
- Immigrant Legal Resource Center
San Francisco, California
- Immigration and Human Rights Clinic, University of the District of Columbia Law School
Washington, D.C.
- International Refugee Assistance Project, Inc.
New York, New York
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
New York, New York
- Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic
Los Angeles, California
- National Justice For Our Neighbors
Annandale, Virginia

- 1 National Survivor Network
- 2 Los Angeles, California
- 3 Pangea Legal Services
- 4 San Francisco, California
- 5 Program for Torture Victims (PTV)
- 6 Los Angeles, California
- 7 Public Counsel
- 8 Los Angeles, California
- 9 Sanctuary for Families
- 10 New York, New York
- 11 The Advocates for Human Rights
- 12 Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 13 UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic
- 14 Davis, California

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