

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
*Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security*

The Honorable Chis Murphy
*Chairman, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security*

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
*Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security*

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
*Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Homeland Security*

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

March 15, 2021

Re: FY 2022 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Bill

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned 245 national, state and local organizations recognize that transformative change is necessary to bring justice and humanity to the U.S. immigration system. Buckling under decades of an enforcement-only approach to immigration by the U.S. government, immigrants and border communities are looking to the Biden-Harris Administration to begin repairing harms. Members of Congress have a critical role to play in ensuring the Administration's ability to effectively implement reforms toward justice by adopting a transformative set of appropriations bills.

The Defund Hate coalition, We Are Home campaign and the signing partners below are committed to defunding the anti-Black, state-sanctioned violence that has historically been at the core of our country's systems of enforcement, from local policing to federal immigration agencies. We believe in investing in a framework where everyone's humanity and dignity is recognized and valued and know that defunding hate can't wait.

Each year, the federal government wastes nearly \$25 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to militarize border communities and profile, jail, and deport members of our communities and people seeking a better life. As Congress considers the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Bill, we urge Congress to prioritize the wellbeing of all immigrant and border communities by dramatically cutting funding to ICE and CBP each by at least 50% as a first step to ending our enforcement-only response to migration.

As organizations representing a vast, multi-racial coalition of directly-impacted immigrants, border residents and allies across the country, we have witnessed the countless ways our communities have suffered the traumatizing and deadly consequences of ICE and CBP funding. Fiscal Year 2020 alone was stained with significant abuses at the hands of these agencies, including the [highest-reported death toll](#) of immigrants under ICE custody in 15 years. Most recently, despite DHS' discretion to halt removals, ICE has hurriedly carried out [over 26,000 deportations](#) and expulsions between Jan. 20th and February 16th, 2021, all supported by the Department's astronomical budget amid a global pandemic.

Immigrants in ICE and CBP custody also continue to [face the constant threat of COVID-19 exposure](#). Immigrants in detention are jailed in ["hotbeds of infection,"](#) with unsanitary, overcrowded conditions exacerbating the spread of COVID-19 and making those in custody [13x more likely](#) to contract the virus. ICE's failure to address the spread of COVID-19 in its facilities and release immigrants from detention has contributed [over 245,000 COVID-19 cases](#) to the total U.S. caseload as well as numerous cases of COVID-19 spread to other countries as a result of deportation flights.

Meanwhile, continued border wall construction and reliance on deterrence-focused enforcement strategies carried out by CBP have wreaked destruction on the borderlands—including the [dynamiting of pristine mountain wilderness](#), [severing wildlife migration corridors](#) and [desecration of Native American burial sites](#)—and endangered lives by forcing migrants to cross into more remote regions. Yet, a "virtual" or "smart" wall is not a humane or benign alternative to a physical wall - and must be sharply restricted. In fact, "smart" wall, surveillance and other technologies risk real harms for the environment, infringe on privacy rights of border communities, and can lead to more deaths as border-crossers take more dangerous routes to avoid detection.

In 2019, CBP requested millions in supplemental funding for medical supplies, only to [waste the money on ATVs and dirt bikes](#). That same year, ICE transferred \$155 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), during hurricane season, to carry out the illegal and racist Trump-era "Migrant Protections Protocol" program. In the roughly 18 years that the

Department of Homeland Security has existed, the federal government has spent \$333 billion on immigration enforcement.

Despite ICE and CBP's well-documented and lengthy history of abuse, Congress has consistently approved funding increases to these agencies. This money has not only resulted in the egregious mismanagement of millions in taxpayer dollars, but in greater enforcement and abuse against predominantly Black and Brown immigrants and Indigenous peoples. The mechanisms built to target, detain, and deport immigrants are rooted in and function in collaboration with systems of anti-Black racism and white supremacy. Congress cannot protect our communities and begin to change these systems of oppression by continuing to give these agencies blank checks.

The federal budget should be a moral document that reflects our values, in which funding that perpetuates xenophobia and racism has no place. Congress has the opportunity to chart a new course by investing taxpayer dollars into the collective health and well-being of everyone, regardless of immigration status. **As such, we respectfully urge you to prioritize the following demands in the FY2022 spending bills:**

- ***Cut funding for ICE and CBP's overall budgets by at least 50%, including specifically 50% cuts in funding for ICE officers and Border Patrol agents.***
- ***Reduce the ICE Custody Operations account by at least 75%, including through prohibition of the use of funds for the detention of families, and ensuring that ICE cannot use funds to detain people without access to an individualized consideration of release. Instead invest funding in programs that move away from detention and surveillance and prioritize un-mandated, community-based care outside of DHS.***
- ***No funding for border wall/barrier construction, rescind or redirect unobligated border wall funding from previous appropriations Acts, including from cancelled contracts, and sharply restrict "virtual" wall and mass-surveillance technologies; instead, provide reparations for border communities and resources to restore areas that have been negatively impacted by wall construction.***
- ***Restrict DHS authority to transfer and reprogram funding to ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations account.***

Each dollar appropriated to ICE and CBP is money directed at furthering the harm inflicted against our communities and putting lives at risk. Dramatically divesting from ICE and CBP creates expansive opportunities for Congress to deepen investment in critical resources by

redirecting taxpayer dollars into solutions that help protect our communities. Now is the time to act.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

ACLU
African American Ministers In Action
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Alianza Americas
Ameinu
America's Voice
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Amnesty International USA
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Asylum-seekers Sponsorship Project
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Avodah
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Border Kindness
Bridges Faith Initiative
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Codepink
Community Change Action
Community Justice Exchange
Defending Rights & Dissent
Detention Watch Network
Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)
Faith in Action

Faith in Public Life
Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement
Families Belong Together
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom for Immigrants
Habonim Dror North America
Haitian Bridge Alliance
HBCU Collective
Human Impact Partners
Human Rights Defense Center
Human Rights First
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Equality
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Immigration Hub
Indivisible
Innovation Law Lab
International Tribunal of Conscience of Peoples in Movement
Japanese American Citizens League
Jetpac Resource Center
Just Futures Law
Justice Strategies
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Legal Aid at Work
Lights for Liberty
Mijente
MomsRising/MamásConPoder
MoveOn
Mychal Judge Apostolate
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Litigation Alliance
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

New American Leaders Action Fund
Nicaragua Center for community Action
Northern Jaguar Project
Peace Action
People's Action
Poder Latinx
Quixote Center
RAICES
Revolutionary Love Project
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Showing Up for Racial Justice
Sisters of Mercy Northeast
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Southern Border Communities Coalition
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Revolutionary Love Project
Torture Abolition And Survivors Support Coalition International
Transgender Law Center
UndocuBlack Network
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United We Dream
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)
Voices for Progress
We Are Home Campaign
Win Without War
Witness at the Border/Testigos en la Frontera
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

State/Regional Organizations

Adhikaar
Al Otro Lado
Aldea - The People's Justice Center
American Friends Service Committee, Colorado
Asian American Advocacy Fund
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta

Bend the Arc Jewish Action: South Jersey
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action California
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ)
Carolina Jews for Justice
CASA
Central American Resource Center- CARECEN- of California
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Colorado Jobs with Justice
Colorado People's Alliance
Courageous Resistance of the Desert--Black Immigration Initiative Committee
Essex County Community Organization - Massachusetts
Faith In New Jersey
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Grassroots Leadership
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Action Alliance
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Individual
Infinite Creative Literary
Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Community Action (MN)
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
Kent Street Coalition Human Rights
Kickapoo-Guatemala Accompaniment Project
La Resistencia
Latino Caucus of New Hampshire
Legal Aid Justice Center
Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Detention
Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center
Make the Road Nevada
Make the Road New York
Make the Road NJ
Motivation Motivates
Never Again Action NH
New Hampshire - Vermont Guatemala Accompaniment Project
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center
New Sanctuary Coalition
New York Immigration Coalition

NM CAFé
NM Dream Team
No More Deaths
NorCal Resist
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
Ohio Immigrant Alliance
Orange County Equality Coalition
Partnerships for Trauma Recovery
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition
Policy Director
Public Counsel
Queer Detainee Empowerment Project
Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East Coast
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation
Santa Fe Dreamers Project
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)
SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas NH
SPLC Action Fund
The Advocates for Human Rights
Together Colorado
Tri-State Franciscan Solidarity Table
Unitarian Universalist Action New Hampshire
Vermont Interfaith Action
Washington Defender Association
Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Local Organizations

Adelante Alabama Worker Center
API Equality-LA
Bay Area Asylum Support Coalition (BAASC)
Bend the Arc Jewish Action - Portland
Bend the Arc of Greater Ann Arbor
Bend the Arc: Champaign-Urbana
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Cincinnati
Bend the Arc: San Luis Obispo

Border Crit Institute
Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalists Fellowship
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC
Cada de la Cultura
Casa Mariposa Detention Visitation Program
Casa Ruby
Casa San Jose
Central American Students Association at Harvard
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos (United Workers' Center)
Centro Humanitario Para Los Trabajadores
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Collingswood Democratic Committee
Desert Support for Asylum Seekers
Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project
Faithful Friends/Amigos Fieles
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Granite State Organizing Project
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Guadalupe Presbyterian Church detention ministry
Hanover Friends (Quaker) Meeting, Peace and Social Concerns Committee
Heights Friends of Immigrants
Hilton Head for Peace
Immigrant Rights Action/Grupo de Acción
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice of Western MA
Jewish Youth for Community Action
Keene Immigrant and Refugee Partnership
Kent Street Coalition Human Rights Working Group
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
LA Voice
Libertas Center for Human Rights
Mano Amiga SM
Mariposa Legal
Meriden Congregational Church, UCC
Motivation Motivates
Mount Sinai Human Rights Program
Movement for Justice in El Barrio
Muslim Justice League
New Hampshire Brazilian Council

NLG-SF Bay Area Immigration Justice Committee
NYU School of Law Immigrant Rights Clinic
Oasis Center
Organized Communities Against Deportations
Project Home
Pursuing Justice
Refugee Support Network
Ruth Zolla
Seattle Immigrant Rights Action Group
Self
Skagit Immigrant Rights Council
Sojourners Detention Visitation
St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
The Bronx Defenders
UnLocal
Wallingford Indivisible
Wayne Action for Racial Equality
Wellspring United Church of Christ
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)