



## **California Welcoming Task Force Calls on Biden Administration to End Title 42 and Take Common-Sense Measures to Welcome People Seeking Asylum with Dignity**

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**San Diego, CA** — Since March 2020, the U.S. government has routinely expelled people seeking asylum at the border under a policy known as “Title 42,” a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) public health order that uses the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to prevent people from pursuing their legal and human right to seek refuge in the U.S. This cruel and unlawful policy is just one of several, including “metering” and “Remain in Mexico,” that have been used to effectively dismantle the asylum process at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The organizations that make up the California Welcoming Task Force (CAWTF) today call on the Biden administration to end Title 42 and all other border policies that restrict people’s access to asylum. Today also marks the end of the CDC’s current 60-day review of Title 42 and an announcement regarding its continuation expected soon.

The Biden administration should not only take this opportunity to immediately end Title 42, it must also implement common-sense measures that begin to repair the damage it has caused and welcome people with dignity and humanity.

The California Welcoming Task Force is made up of organizations on both sides of the border, in the California - Baja California region, that have witnessed the suffering these policies have caused, especially for children and for Black, LGBTQ+ and indigenous people seeking asylum and other disproportionately impacted groups. CAWTF groups stand ready to assist the administration in rebuilding our asylum system, but they need a willing partner.

The federal government has the capacity, resources and legal obligations to roll back these inhumane policies. And the Biden administration must work with community-based service providers all along the border to ensure they have the resources they need to welcome people who have suffered so much to reach our nation's doors.

The California Welcoming Task Force would like to make the following recommendations to ensure a safe, welcoming and dignified process for people seeking asylum when these harsh policies end.

### **1. Clear and Timely Communication From the Administration Is Vital**

- Establish direct lines of communication between nongovernmental organizations working with people seeking asylum, people seeking asylum themselves, federal immigration agencies and local and state government
- Inform stakeholders of policy and practice changes prior to public announcement in order to prepare legal information & reception services.
- Public statements must be consistent and accurate. Inconsistent messaging from the administration leads to misinformation.
- Guarantee public transparency regarding all collaboration mechanisms with Mexican authorities at the Port of Entry to avoid unlawful activity or corruption.

### **2. Immediately Process Outstanding Humanitarian Parole and Title 42 Exemption Requests for Vulnerable Asylum Seekers**

- Immediately begin processing humanitarian parole petitions at the San Ysidro Port of Entry
- Issue Guidance on humanitarian parole standards
- CBP must issue decisions in no more than 7 days
- While the U.S. must dedicate the resources necessary to process all people seeking asylum, critical attention must be paid to vulnerable populations:
  - Medically vulnerable populations (including those with mental health conditions)
  - Victims of kidnapping and trafficking or sexual assault
  - LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum
  - Children and their families
  - People seeking asylum who are unsheltered
  - Black people seeking asylum
  - Women expelled together with their US-citizen newborns

- Extra-continental people seeking asylum who do not speak Spanish fluently
- Indigenous language speakers

### **3. Border Processing for People Seeking Asylum**

- The Federal Government must guarantee the right to present at U.S. Ports of Entry to seek asylum, in accordance with the ruling in *Al Otro Lado v. Mayorkas*, which found that the turning back and “metering” of asylum seekers at ports of entry was illegal. This should be ensured through independent monitoring.
- At the California-Mexico border, the San Ysidro Port of Entry Ped West, which is currently not in use, should be used exclusively to process people seeking asylum. This entrance should be staffed sufficiently to allow swift and orderly processing and with persons aware of all new protocols related to asylum seeker processing.
- U.S. attorneys need to be given adequate and safe space to observe the process and to inform any people seeking asylum who are not successfully paroled into the U.S. of their rights, as well as assist with any other legal matters that arise at the POE.
- Guarantee family units (including units beyond the nuclear family) are not separated when exercising their right to seek asylum in the United States
  - Broaden the definition of a family unit and direct border officers to document all family relationships.
- Given the backlog of Employment Authorization Documents pending before U.S.C.I.S. immediately issue Employment Authorization Documents to people seeking asylum
- The Federal Government should take immediate steps to process into the United States people whose right to seek asylum was denied due to policies including “metering,” “Remain in Mexico,” and Title 42. While the government should recognize the harm caused to these individuals and prioritize processing them to seek asylum accordingly, this should in no way inhibit or delay the ability of others not previously impacted by these policies from seeking asylum at U.S. ports of entry.

### **4. No Person Seeking Asylum Should Be Abandoned on the Street Without Support Nor Sent to a U.S. Detention Center**

- No person seeking asylum should be abandoned on the street without support outside the U.S. Port of Entry
- No person seeking asylum should be detained in an immigration detention center or subjected to invasive forms of digital surveillance.

- The San Diego Rapid Response Network Migrant Shelter Services operated by Jewish Family Service of San Diego provides vulnerable asylum seeking families with respite shelter services, case management, food, financial and travel assistance, and legal support, as well as COVID-19 testing and overall medical screenings and support through UCSD Health.
- The Federal Government should provide assistance with transportation
  - The government utilized vast resources to transport people seeking asylum along and across the border to unjustly and illegally expel them under Title 42. Those resources should be used to transport people seeking asylum to shelters and service hubs.

## **5. Public Health and COVID-19 Response**

- Create a plan and invest necessary resources to ensure that people seeking asylum as well as bi-national frontline workers receive PPE, COVID testing and vaccinations

## **6. Process into the U.S. people subjected to Remain in Mexico (Migrant Protection Protocols, MPP)**

- The Remain in Mexico policy is cruel and inhumane. It should be immediately eliminated, and the Federal Government already has the information for people subjected to the policy and should swiftly process them into the United States if they are still outside the U.S.
- Specific recommendations for processing MPP respondents are included in the California Welcoming Task Force [letter](#) to the Biden administration sent on January 28, 2021.

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The **California Welcoming Task Force** is a binational coalition dedicated to re-envisioning how the U.S. can welcome people seeking asylum safely and expeditiously at our border by coordinating across sectors (humanitarian & health, legal, advocacy and communications). More info at [www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf](http://www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf)