



California Welcoming Task Force Groups Condemn U.S. Gov't Plan to Once Again Detain Immigrant Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, March 9, 2023

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San Diego — As organizations working on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, we work directly with families who are fleeing danger to seek safety in the United States. Parents who leave everything behind to save their children's lives are brave, loving people who embark upon a perilous journey precisely because what they face at home is often worse. We are extremely disappointed with this Administration's failure to keep their campaign promise and for them to reinstate policies and practices already proven illegal, ineffective and just plain cruel. To greet these families with anything other than a warm welcome and a real opportunity to pursue an immigration case is unacceptable. To greet them with detention is simply abhorrent.

[The California Welcoming Task Force](#) opposes immigration detention for all people — including families, children and babies — in all its forms, including invasive surveillance mechanisms such as the GPS devices locked onto people's bodies. We know that immigration detention for families has continued in various ways throughout the entire Biden Administration. The irreparable harms caused by immigration detention have been well documented by our members, for example in U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities, where pregnant people, children and babies continue to be subjected to mistreatment and held in freezing cold concrete cells.

We urge the administration to publicly commit to not reinstating immigration detention for families and to put an end to all forms of immigration detention.

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California Welcoming Task Force member organizations offered the following statements:

Lindsay Toczyłowski, Executive Director of Immigrant Defenders Law Center, said:

“The news that the Biden administration is considering reviving the practice of throwing children and families in ICE detention centers is disturbing. It is yet another profound disappointment that the Biden administration is looking to some of the darkest days of the Trump administration for ideas on how to meet families seeking asylum with cruelty rather than dignity. The fact that this administration, which ran on promises to restore humanity at the border, is considering such a morally bankrupt plan proves how far their sense of how to treat the most vulnerable among us has fallen.”

Pedro Rios, Director of the American Friends Service Committee's U.S./Mexico Border Program, said:

“It is unconscionable that President Biden is considering reinstating the detention of migrant families, on top of the anti-asylum measures his administration already has implemented. All amount to punitive deterrence strategies that are neither safe, orderly, or humane. Subjecting families, including children, to detention could amount to long-term traumatic experiences and are an irresponsible way to treat people seeking refuge. We call on the Biden Administration to create dignified solutions for migrant families instead of inflicting more pain.”

Angelicas Salas, Executive Director of CHIRLA, said:

“We are deeply worried this Administration might be considering reinstating the Trump-era practice of family detention. Instead of gutting the asylum system even more, President Biden can and must begin to do the right thing and protect and welcome the most vulnerable seeking safety in the United States without political considerations.

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Families belong in communities to heal and flourish. They do not belong in cages. The President would do right in remembering his promises to the Latino and immigrant electorate and work on delivering real and compassionate solutions, not engage in this dangerous race to the bottom and repeat the cruel mistakes of his predecessor."

Public Counsel made the following statement:

"Public Counsel unequivocally opposes the detention of migrant families. Research and clinical data has shown that the detention of children causes them irreparable harm and we decry any attempt to stem immigration with this inhumane practice. We urge the Biden Administration to abandon this and other Trump-era immigration policies, and adopt a more compassionate approach to those fleeing violence and poverty and seeking safety on our shores."

Alvaro M. Huerta, Director of Litigation & Advocacy at Immigrant Defenders Law Center, said:

"Whether it is a continued insistence on using Title 42 to exclude asylum seekers, proposing a new asylum ban, or now threatening to renew family detention, it's becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between the Biden and Trump administrations when it comes to immigration policy. It boggles the mind to think that President Biden would even consider something as cruel and heartless as detaining families—something he condemned the Trump administration for doing."

Kate Clark, senior director of immigration services for Jewish Family Service of San Diego, said:

"The Biden Administration's consideration to reinstate family detentions – a practice it openly rejected throughout the campaign trail – is an abhorrent betrayal of its commitments to rebuild our nation's broken immigration system and implement compassionate, humane policies. Through our work, we have seen firsthand and

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heard countless reports of how cruel and inhumane the conditions in these detention facilities can be. To force any person, let alone a child, to endure these conditions is reprehensible. This latest news, combined with the Administration's recent proposal to enact an asylum ban, completely contradicts the promises that were made when President Biden took office. We demand the Administration reconsider and put an immediate end to both proposed actions."

Monika Y. Langerica, Center for Immigration Law and Policy at UCLA Law, said:

"The news that the U.S. government is considering reviving the abusive practice of jailing families seeking asylum is yet another reminder of the Biden Administration's unacceptable embrace of policies of past administrations that penalize people, including young children, for seeking protection in the United States. The Administration must reverse course and salvage its legacy on border and asylum issues, which to date remains beholden to anti-immigrant interests and continues to put people and families seeking safety in grave danger."

Stephen Manning, Executive Director of Innovation Law Lab, said:

"Every administration that has incarcerated families - including Obama and Trump - has done so for its own politically cynical calculus. The truth, however, is that the Biden Administration cannot incarcerate families without being against women. That is, the message that those who support family detention want to send to women is this: if you seek asylum to save your life, the U.S. will jail your children.

"It is not a radical truth to say that jailing infants and toddlers is wrong. Now is not the time to reinstate family detention. Now is the time to put an end to the practice, as well as all immigration detention, forever."

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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

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expeditiously at our border by coordinating across sectors (humanitarian & health, legal, advocacy and communications). More info at www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf