



Media Statement

Jan. 14, 2025

California Welcoming Task Force Statement

Re: Trump Immigration Policies: Mass Deportations Preparedness and Know Your Rights

With Donald Trump's impending presidency, the [California Welcoming Task Force](#), a binational coalition dedicated to re-envisioning how the U.S. welcomes people seeking asylum safely, is working hard to prepare our communities for significant changes to the immigration system, including looming mass deportations and further militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Such sweeping changes would have widespread negative impacts to all Americans, with what the [American Immigration Council's Mass Deportation special report](#) finds to be “**devastating costs to America, its budget and economy.**”

[Trump's alleged first immigration action, to declare a national emergency and deploy the military](#) to assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in mass deportations, is unlawful and egregious. He has stated he will deport U.S. citizens in [families with mixed status](#) to their country of origin or force children and adults to languish in detention camps. This action would rip apart neighborhoods and communities. We join advocacy groups nationwide to fight for the rights of all people.

The California Welcoming Task Force encourages everyone to act as allies for those at risk of deportation. They are our neighbors, coworkers, friends and loved ones. Their contributions to society are significant, and their removal would have a lasting impact on our economy.

There are an [estimated seven to eight million](#) undocumented workers in this country, and their removal would exacerbate already worsening labor shortages. The impact on numerous industries, such as [construction, agriculture, healthcare and hospitality](#), would be catastrophic. A deportation effort of this scale would also cost [hundreds of billions of dollars](#) in California alone, with millions more spent annually to fund immoral and unsafe detention camps.

Let us be clear: Under U.S. law, all people, including newcomers seeking asylum and undocumented people, have rights if approached by law enforcement at home, work, school or out in their communities.

For detailed “Know Your Rights” information please visit: www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights.

For a printable pocket-sized script on what to say when confronted by law enforcement about immigration status, visit: www.ilrc.org/red-cards.

For details on the humanitarian and legal services provided by some of the nongovernmental organizations within the California Welcoming Task Force to newcomers and immigrants in the U.S., please see our [Immigrant Resources Fact Sheet](#) accompanying this statement.

The California Welcoming Task Force knows that immense challenges await us, but history has shown that solidarity, resistance and community strength are our greatest tools. To the communities we serve that feel the weight of this moment:

We will continue to organize to build a future where all people are treated with respect, compassion and fairness.

“The border has long been a flashpoint for human rights violations, but the past eight years have seen an alarming intensification of the challenges and deteriorating conditions,” said **Erika Pinheiro, executive director of Al Otro Lado**. “While our efforts remain steadfast in protecting the rights of refugees – whose access to safety in the U.S. faces even greater threats – we are equally committed to supporting those being deported to Mexico. As we brace for the incoming Trump administration, we recognize the heightened risks we face as a border organization providing legal and humanitarian assistance to migrants. The potential criminalization of our work looms large, but we remain resolute. History has shown that when our community unites, we are at our strongest. We call on the community now to stand with us, so we can continue this vital mission together. Together with our partners at the California Welcoming Task Force we remain dedicated to reimagining how the United States ensures a safe and compassionate welcome for those seeking asylum.”

“Californians must protect immigrants and their families from the unjust, inhumane, anti-immigration policies and practices that President-elect Trump promises to enact,” said **Norma Chávez-Peterson, executive director of the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties**. “Mass raids and deportations, family separations and other extreme measures create a climate of terror and do nothing to make the federal immigration system function more effectively. While litigation will be a key element in the ACLU’s response to a second anti-immigration Trump administration, we know that the courts alone cannot protect our communities. California must act now to prevent the federal government from seizing state and local resources to carry out mass deportations in our state. This will be a four-year battle. It will take the will of the people, leveraging the power of our state and local governments, to safeguard immigrants’ rights. It will take all of us.”

“The threats by the incoming Trump Administration to destabilize our communities and separate families are real, and we must prepare the best possible way to ensure as many people as possible are ready with information, access to services and skills to safeguard their future,” said **Angelica Salas, executive director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)**. “What we need to let our community know is that they are not alone. We will collectively defend and stand by our neighbors who are being targeted, and we will extend as much of a safety net as possible, joined by love, strength and resilience.”

“The American Friends Service Committee’s U.S.-Mexico Border Program has historically conducted know-your-rights workshops for over two decades to migrants and their families in the greater San Diego County,” said **Pedro Rios, director of the American Friends Service Committee’s US-Mexico Border Program**. “We are committed to providing information about human rights protections, strategies to defend those rights, and we urge community members to organize themselves into grassroot collectives to limit deportations and prevent family separation. Given the precarious times we face with an incoming administration bent on cruelty, we will continue to work with our regional partners to uplift the dignity of those targeted by immigration enforcement agencies.”

“JFS has a 106-year history of pivoting to meet our community’s needs including the pandemic, fires, government shutdowns, and more. In anticipation of new needs that will arise with the incoming administration, we are continuing and working to expand our [critical immigration legal services work](#) and [social services support](#) for newcomers and San Diegans of all immigration statuses,” said **JFS CEO Michael Hopkins**. “We are committed to preserving the dignity and human rights of all people. We have seen firsthand that immigrants strengthen our community and make the country more prosperous and competitive in a changing world.”

“ImmDef has grown from a team of just 30 lawyers in 2016 to over 200 dedicated staff members today. We are ready now more than ever to stand up against inhumane immigration policies that threaten to tear families apart, destabilize communities, and harm the dignity and threaten the safety of immigrants,” said **Lindsay Toczyłowski, ImmDef’s president and CEO**. “The deliberate cruelty of such policies demands a united

response. Together with our partners and the resilient communities we serve, we will hold the line against injustice. We are here to ensure that families stay together, communities remain safe, and no one must face an unjust immigration system alone.”

“The threat of mass deportations represents a crisis that demands a collective and united response,” said **Paulina Olvera Cáñez, executive director of Espacio Migrante**. “From our shelter in Tijuana, we have supported migrant families who arrive facing displacement, trauma, and extreme vulnerability after being torn from their communities in the United States. If these inhumane policies are carried out, mass deportations will overwhelm shelters and expose thousands to precarious conditions. However, we know that when we act together, we can resist and build hope. We call on communities on both sides of the border to organize and mobilize: to those in the United States, we urge you to raise your voices and act as allies to prevent these forced separations; to those in Mexico, we ask you to build support networks for those returning under such painful circumstances. Espacio Migrante reaffirms its commitment to providing shelter, vital services, and a space to heal, but this is a collective effort that requires all of us to build a more humane border, where dignity and compassion are at the center of our response, ensuring that no family is left without support and no person is denied their basic rights.”

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 and health, legal, advocacy and communications). More info. at www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf.

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