

September 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Ahead of the 107th World Day for Migrants and Refugees on September 26, 2021, we the undersigned 164 Catholic organizations reach out in shared faith to urge you to end the use of Title 42 immediately. Pope Francis offers us two paths for the future in his recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, writing: **“Once this health crisis passes ... God willing ... we will think no longer in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those,’ but only ‘us.’”** The continuation of the Trump-era change to Title 42 is taking our country down the wrong path.

The Misuse of Title 42 is Anti-Science and Perpetuates Anti-Immigrant Tropes

Under your leadership, the CDC recently issued a new order continuing Title 42 expulsions indefinitely, despite epidemiologists’ and public health experts’ repeated statements that this use of Title 42 lacks public health justification and actually threatens public health. This is a gross violation of the human dignity of migrants and refugees at the southern border, who are our siblings in Christ. We unequivocally condemn the false, hateful, dehumanizing narrative underlying the misuse of Title 42, connecting immigrants with disease. Furthermore, even if a true public health risk existed, which again, science and experts in your administration adamantly reject, the policy solution would be to provide vaccines and meet healthcare needs, not send asylum seekers back to situations where their lives and freedom are at risk. Faith and community based organizations at the border are ready to assist in providing testing, vaccines and healthcare but are currently being prevented from doing so.

The Misuse of Title 42 Violates International Human Law and Undermines U.S. Credibility on the World Stage

Since the Trump administration first began misusing Title 42 in March 2020, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers have rapidly turned away nearly all arrivals at the southern border. As a result, the vast majority of asylum seekers are denied the opportunity to state a credible fear of returning to their home countries and begin the process of applying for asylum. This is in contravention to international law, and the [United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees has called on the United States](#) to end the policy and come “in line with international legal and human rights obligations.” Over the past six months, human rights researchers and journalists have identified [over 6,356 kidnappings, torture, rape, and other attacks](#) suffered by people expelled or blocked at the U.S.-Mexico border under the Title 42 order.

We Cannot “Restore the Soul of the Nation” with the Continued Misuse of Title 42

Your call and promise during your campaign to “restore the soul of the nation” spoke to a return to morality in furtherance of just and humane law and policy. As Catholics, we know that [“God created us in his image, in the image of his own triune being, a communion in diversity.”](#) Because of this, “every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 107). The continued misuse of Title 42 fails to respect the dignity of migrants and refugees and honor God’s image in every human person. In addition to the catastrophic impact this policy has on individuals and families, it sends a message that perpetrates fear of the “other,” and discourages decision makers at every level of government in our country from legislating and crafting policy with human dignity at the heart.

Recent statements from your administration undercut the right to asylum and reinforce anti-asylum narratives. This includes those that attempt to [justify](#) treating asylum seekers and migrants as threats to public health and tout efforts to provide protection for people [“closer to their homes,”](#) a phrase often used in xenophobic rhetoric aimed at denying people protection in the United States. We are particularly

dismayed by recent comments indicating that people “should not come” to the United States to seek asylum and that they could instead seek asylum from their home countries. Again, the message from a United States of America with a soul must be simply “welcome.”

Responding to Jesus’s Commandment: Love One Another

It is therefore with great concern that we make this request to immediately end the misuse of Title 42. We must recall Jesus’s message to “love your neighbor as yourself,” for it is by doing so—by recognizing and respecting the intrinsic dignity of each person—that we live out our faith (Mark 12:31). As Catholics, we recall Pope Francis’s words, that “if every human being possesses an inalienable dignity, if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbor was born in my country or elsewhere. My own country also shares responsibility for his or her development” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 125).

In this year’s message for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees, which Pope Francis titled “Towards an Ever Wider ‘We,’” he calls us to a personal and collective commitment that “makes no distinction between natives and foreigners, between residents and guests, since it is a matter of a treasure we hold in common, from whose care and benefits no one should be excluded.”

We cannot absolve ourselves of our sacred responsibility to care for our migrant siblings. The misuse of Title 42 is a travesty that perpetuates grave harm not only on the migrant community, but upon all of us living in the United States. Move the United States towards an ever wider “we”—end the misuse of Title 42.

Sincerely,

Call To Action

Carmelites, Vedruna CIJPIC

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Cristo Rey Center

Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA

Daughters of Wisdom US Province

Dominican Sister of Peace

Faith in Public Life, Catholic Program

Franciscan Action Network

Ignatian Solidarity Network

Jesuit Conference Office of Justice & Ecology

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

JPIC Office at the Stuart Center

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Black Sisters' Conference

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Pax Christi USA

Presentation Sisters Union, USA Unit

Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

Sisters of Charity Federation

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA

Society of the Sacred Heart US-Canada

U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

Arizona

Dominican Sisters of Peace Tucson, AZ
Kino Border Initiative

California

California NETWORK Advocates Team
Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
Elder Options, Inc.
Immaculate Heart Community
Immaculate Heart Community Commission on Justice for Immigrants and Refugees
Ramona Convent Secondary School
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Western American Area
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange
Society of Helpers

Connecticut

Apostle Immigrant Services
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Holy Family Just Faith Ministry
Sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry - U.S. Province

Georgia

Catholic Charities Atlanta

Illinois

Bethany House of Hospitality
Chicago Benedictines for Peace
Congregation of St. Joseph, IL
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants
St Vincent's Immigration Law Clinic
Wheaton Franciscans JPIC Office
Sisters of the Living Word

Indiana

Catholic Charities Indianapolis
Center for Social Concerns, University of Notre Dame
Center for Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN
Indiana NETWORK Advocates Team
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Saint Mary's College's Office for the Common Good
Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Leadership Team
Sisters of the Holy Cross
St. Monica Catholic Church

Iowa

Church of the Resurrection Social Justice Ministry
Mercy Focus on Haiti
Presentation Lantern Center
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton
Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque
Sisters of the Presentation

Kansas

Dominican Sisters Ministry of Presence
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Dodge City, KS
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Great Bend, KS
Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, KS
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation

Kentucky

Catholic Charities Diocese of Owensboro
Leadership Team of the American Province of the Congregation of Divine Providence
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Loretto and the Loretto Community
Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph

Louisiana

Catholic Charities of North Louisiana

Maryland

Esperanza Center Legal Services
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic Midwest
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA

Massachusetts

Catholic Social Services of Fall River, Inc.
Community of Sant'Egidio
Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield

Michigan

Dominican Sisters - Grand Rapids
Adrian Dominican Sisters
IHM Sisters - Leadership Council
Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary

Minnesota

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province

Missouri

Adorers of the Blood of Christ, U.S. Region
Our Lady of Sorrows Care for Creation Team
Seeds of Justice
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis

New Jersey

Emmaus Community of Christian Hope
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth - Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity

New Mexico

New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

New York

Church Women United in New York State
Congregation of St. Joseph, NY
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
Franciscan Sisters of Peace
Long Island Immigration Clinic
New York NETWORK Advocates Team
Refugee and Immigration Committee of St. Joseph University Parish
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of St. Dominic - Amityville, New York
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province
Sisters of St. Joseph, Watertown, NY
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester

Ohio

Community of Saint Peter
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center of Cincinnati
Ohio Nuns on the Bus
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Cristo Rey Center Immigration Services
Catholic Worker Akron
Cleveland NETWORK Advocates Team
Dominican Sisters of Peace Columbus
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Akron OH
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Mingo Junction OH
Sisters of Notre Dame
Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, Ohio
Sisters of the Precious Blood
WISH (Women's Interfaith Spiritual Heritage)

Oregon

Eugene Catholic Worker
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, U.S.-Ontario Province

Pennsylvania

Bernardine Franciscan Sisters
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Marywood University
Philadelphia NETWORK Advocates Team
Saint Joseph's University Campus Ministry
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Sisters of IHM, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania (cont.)

Sisters of St. Joseph of NW Pennsylvania
Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, aka Medical Mission Sisters
Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Tennessee

Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc.

Texas

Catholic Charities of Dallas, Inc. Immigration and Legal Services
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Hope Border Institute
Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate

Virginia

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Virginia NETWORK Advocates Team

Washington

Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center of Seattle

Wisconsin

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross USA Province
Sisters of St Francis of Assisi
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province