

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2021

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

Dear President Biden:

We write to express our support for sanctuary families currently living in houses of worship around the United States. Today there are 40 people living in sanctuary, taking refuge in houses of worship as their only option to be safe from deportation and to keep their families intact.¹ The Obama administration granted many of these people stays of removal, but over the last four years they have been forced into sanctuary as the Trump administration has worked incessantly to deport them or send them to detention centers.²

Additionally, throughout the past four years, those in sanctuary have faced targeted retaliation from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including severe fines ranging from \$200,000 to almost \$500,000; U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE) field offices targeting them; and continuous surveillance.³ We ask you to ensure that your immigration policies are crafted with dignity and respect towards those who live in sanctuary, and that you commit to the following remedial steps:

1. Directing ICE, by February 12, 2021, to exercise prosecutorial discretion to grant a stay of removal to each person living in sanctuary;
2. Within the first 100 days of your presidency, lifting the deportation orders against all people living in sanctuary; and
3. Signing into law all private bills on behalf of people living in sanctuary that Congress sends to your desk.

Those in sanctuary have suffered enough. Your Administration's actions can bring them the relief they need and deserve.

Immigrants in sanctuary, along with the faith communities that support them, have been working hard to change our broken immigration system for many years. Those in sanctuary have worked

¹ Myrna Orozco and Rev. Noel Andersen, *Sanctuary in the Age of Trump* (Jan 2018), https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/uploads/7/6/9/1/76912017/sanctuary_in_the_age_of_trump_january_2018.pdf.

² *Id.*

³ Austin Sanctuary Network, Free Migration Project, and Grassroots Leadership, *Briefing Guide: FOIA Documents Reveal ICE's Use of Civil Fines to Target Immigrant Leaders in Sanctuary* (Oct. 22, 2020), https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2020/10/Briefing%20Guide%20ICE%20Sanctuary%20Fines%20FOIA_October%2022%202020.pdf.

tirelessly with us as Members of Congress, and have sought to meet with your transition team, to highlight the need for immigration reform to include immigrants facing unjust deportation orders. Now is the time to support and honor the brave fight and leadership of people living in sanctuary and their commitment to resist the retaliatory actions of the Trump administration. We look forward to working with you to ensure that immigrants' rights in the United States are protected.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Kaitlyn Montan in Congressman Castro's office at Kaitlyn.Montan@mail.house.gov or Karlee Popken in Senator Markey's office at Karlee_Popken@markey.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Additional Cosigners:

James P. McGovern
Joyce Beatty
Barbara Lee
Veronica Escobar
Jan Schakowsky
Ayanna Pressley
Nydia M. Velázquez
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Dwight Evans
Alcee L. Hastings
Lori Trahan
Sheila Jackson Lee
Lloyd Doggett
Sylvia R. Garcia
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