



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS  
117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

March 29, 2022

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The Honorable Anthony Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C. Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

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The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dr. Rochelle Walensky  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

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Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-07)

Dear Secretary Blinken, Secretary Becerra, Secretary Mayorkas, and Director Walensky:

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) urges the administration to end the implementation of Title 42. Over the past year, the CHC has appreciated working with you to reverse the previous administration's xenophobic immigration policies. We commend your efforts to create a more humane immigration system, including your most recent efforts to modernize our asylum process and address the massive immigration court backlog. We remain concerned, however, about the lasting impacts of Title 42 including restricting the legal right to seek asylum in the United States.

As the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) undergoes a public health reassessment of the use of Title 42, we call on the administration to take the necessary steps to prepare and fully end the Title 42 policy. The CHC stands ready to work with you to ensure the U.S. is prepared to meet the needs of refugees from all over the world seeking asylum in our country. The previous administration initiated the Title 42 policy to deny asylum seekers their legal rights to due process and expel them immediately under the guise of the pandemic. However, the CHC believes that Title 42 denies individuals the right to seek

asylum and disproportionately impacts refugees fleeing persecution and violence from Latin American, African, and Caribbean countries, including LGBTQI+, Indigenous communities, and individuals less likely to be traveling with children.

Over the past two years, our country has made enormous progress to protect our communities against the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made noteworthy investments in testing and quarantining capabilities. Vaccines and treatments are also readily available to help prevent severe illnesses and death. The CHC believes that given the changing public health landscape and scientific advancements in limiting the impacts of COVID-19, the Department of State (DOS), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) need to end the use of Title 42 now.

To better understand the justifications for the continued application of Title 42 and how you reached your reassessment of this policy, we request responses to the following questions:

- 1) Following your recent redetermination, please provide an outline on how you determine families and individuals pose a health risk when arriving at our southern borders. Which factors do you take into consideration when assessing those seeking asylum in comparison to those who enter the country on visitor or immigrant visas?
- 2) What steps has HHS taken to ensure parents and children make informed decisions regarding legal proceedings and their legal options?
- 3) How has the Office of Refugee and Resettlement (ORR) utilized the funds appropriated by Congress to respond to child arrivals at the border? Has it streamlined its processes to expedite the transfer of children from CBP custody to ORR custody? What resources does HHS need to ensure it can properly respond to unaccompanied minors seeking asylum?
- 4) What factors does DHS consider when determining that an individual will not face violence or persecution in the country they are repatriated to?
- 5) To what extent, if any, does the CDC work in tandem with HHS and DHS when evaluating Title 42 and its implementation?
- 6) To what extent, if any, has DOS worked with HHS and DHS to inform the administration preparation strategy? Will DOS work with the Mexican government to establish a non-governmental organization to assist asylum seekers? If not, will DOS provide DHS with this authority?

At a time when the world faces historic refugee and migration challenges, we must reaffirm our commitment to treat with dignity and humanity the world's most vulnerable refugees. The CHC urges you to terminate the use of Title 42. Further, the CHC respectfully requests a meeting with Secretary Becerra, Secretary Mayorkas, and Director Walensky to further discuss the policy and any preparation plan ahead of your Title 42 redetermination date. Whether they are fleeing violence from a Russian dictator or a drug cartel, asylum seekers must have a chance to rebuild their lives in safety. The CHC stands ready to work with you to ensure there are safe and secure legal pathways for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Respectfully,



Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Chair  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
First Vice-Chair  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Adriano Espaillat  
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