

January 27, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write today as members of Refugee Council USA – a nonprofit coalition advocating for the rights of forcibly displaced people in the US and around the world – to express our deep concern with the [announcement](#) of a planned Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that would impose significant asylum restrictions reminiscent of the Trump administration. **We urge you to uphold your campaign [promise](#) to “reassert America’s commitment to asylum-seekers and refugees” and end attempts to restrict asylum for people traveling through other countries.**

While we welcome the new pathways for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, these opportunities must not come at the expense of the right to seek asylum. No person wants to flee their home, but many are forced to do so for their own safety (and the safety of their families). Those seeking asylum may not always have the means or the access to use an online app, nor safe enough conditions to be able to apply from their home country.

Your administration’s recent expansions of the use of Title 42, and the pairing of the creation of a safe pathway for some with the denial of access to asylum for refugees seeking protection at the U.S. border, is a troubling precedent. Any rule that seeks to ban, disrupt, limit, or delay people from seeking asylum not only undermines both US and international refugee law but also goes against who we are as a nation and our core values. Actions taken by the United States to limit access to asylum reverberate loudly around the world. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, [stated](#) that these policies “risk undermining the basic foundations of international human rights and refugee law,” while UNHCR [stressed](#) that it is “not in line with refugee law standards.” Other governments will take note of this disregard for the UN Refugee Convention and respond in kind.

We strongly urge you to abandon the planned NPRM, to oppose any further asylum restrictions, and to uphold your promise of building a welcoming immigration system that

truly reflects who we are as a nation, including by prioritizing humanitarian protection for forcibly displaced persons.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tawnya Brown, Senior Vice President of Global Refugee and Immigrant Services, Bethany Christian Services



Erol Kekic, Senior Vice President, Programs, Church World Service



Tsehaye Teferra, President and CEO, Ethiopian Community Development Council



Mark Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS



Hans Van de Weerd, Senior Vice President, Resettlement, Asylum and Integration, International Rescue Committee



Eskinder Negash, President and CEO, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants



Aerlande Wantano, Senior Vice President, U.S. Programs, World Relief



Paul O'Brien, Executive Director, Amnesty International USA



Conchita Cruz, Co-Executive Director, Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project



Nguyen Dinh Thang, CEO & President, BPSOS



Kevin Appleby, Interim Director, Center for Migration Studies of New York



Scott Roehm, Washington Director, The Center for Victims of Torture
Board Chair, Refugee Council USA



Eleanor Acer, Senior Director, Refugee Protection, Human Rights First



Becca Heller, Executive Director, International Refugee Assistance Project



Sharif Aly, CEO, Islamic Relief USA



Joan Rosenhauer, Executive Director, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA



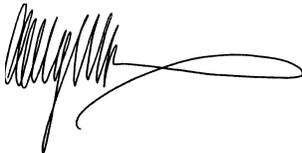
Ann Buwalda, Executive Director, Jubilee Campaign USA



Wendy Young, President, Kids in Need of Defense



Nicole Melaku, Executive Director, National Partnership for New Americans



Abby Maxman, President and CEO, Oxfam America



Kimahli Powell, Executive Director, Rainbow Railroad



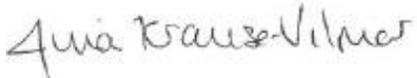
Sasha Chanoff, Executive Director, RefugePoint



Nili Yossinger, Executive Director, Refugee Congress



Jeremy Konyndyk, President, Refugees International



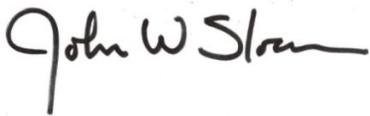
Jina Krause-Vilmar, President and CEO, Upwardly Global



Sarah Ivory, Executive Director, USA Hello



Rachel Perić, Executive Director, Welcoming America



John Slocum, Executive Director, Refugee Council USA

Cc:

The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security

The Honorable Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor

The Honorable Susan Rice, Director of the Domestic Policy Council

Ron Klain, White House Chief of Staff

Julieta Noyes, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

RCUSA is a diverse coalition advocating for just and humane laws and policies, and the promotion of dialogue and communication among government, civil society, and those who need protection and welcome. Individual RCUSA members do not all address all refugee-related issues, nor do all individual members approach common refugee-related issues identically.