

April 26, 2022

Dear Members of Congress,

As 103 faith-based organizations and 215 faith leaders across traditions, we are called to love and welcome our neighbors. The U.S.' promise to provide refuge and freedom from persecution is firmly written into our nation's asylum laws. We write to strongly urge you to uphold our asylum laws and vote NO on any proposal that would limit or undermine access to asylum. Of immediate concern is the *Public Health and Border Security Act of 2022* (S. 4036/H.R. 7458), an anti-asylum bill recently introduced in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. This bill raises the threshold to rescind the public health authority known as Title 42 to an impossible standard. Maintaining Title 42 amounts to more suffering for asylum seekers patiently waiting their chance to legally ask for protection. We believe it is possible to safely and humanely receive asylum seekers while safeguarding public health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public health experts, southern border communities from [Arizona](#), [California](#), [Texas](#), and advocates have reached similar conclusions. Lawmakers have a moral imperative to oppose this legislation and any anti-asylum proposal that would keep Title 42 in place.

On April 1st, the faith community [welcomed](#) the Biden administration's announcement to terminate Title 42 by May 23rd, and made it clear we stand ready to welcome those seeking refuge. We also reiterated our commitment to work together to rebuild a just and humane asylum system. Alongside [faith leaders](#), asylum seekers, [public health experts](#), and [advocates](#), we have consistently urged the Biden administration to put an end to Title 42, and other inhumane, asylum-blocking policies, and to restore a humane and just asylum system built on the values of hospitality and welcome, with due process and without discrimination. Misused under the false pretense of public health, the Title 42 policy has resulted in over 1.7 million expulsions of vulnerable individuals seeking refuge at the U.S. southern border, in contravention of U.S. law and international obligations. Title 42 is damaging to the nation's international standing and individuals.

There are severe physical and mental health [consequences](#) for asylum seekers expelled under the policy, particularly for children, families, and minorities. Title 42 has fueled a humanitarian crisis; since President Biden took office, there have been at least [9,866 reports of violent attacks](#) - including rape, kidnapping, and assault - against people blocked from requesting protection at the U.S.-Mexico border and/or expelled to Mexico under Title 42, as tracked by Human Rights First. It has also been used disparately to expel Black migrants, in particular Haitians, back to a country ill-prepared to support their safe return and reintegration. Additionally, Title 42 has increased the likelihood of repeat crossings. A [June 2021 report](#) by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) acknowledged that Title 42 expulsions have led to "some individuals trying to cross the border multiple times per day." In total, the rate at which people crossed the border multiple times rose from 7% in March 2020 to 40% by October 2020 while Title 42 was in place, before leveling to an annual rate of 27% in 2021. This legislation would put displaced and vulnerable populations like Ukrainians, Afghans, Venezuelans, and others at risk. If this bill passes, people fleeing violence and persecution would continue to be forcibly removed from the U.S. without access to protection and returned to life-threatening and dangerous conditions.

We must facilitate the humane and safe reception of people seeking refuge in the United States in compliance with U.S. law and treaty obligations. Rescinding Title 42 restores basic asylum processing at ports of entry, meaning those who request asylum will be processed into the country so they can pursue their case; those who don't request asylum or who are found not to have a valid claim to protection move through removal proceedings, in accordance with standing asylum law.

The *Public Health and Border Security Act of 2022* ignores individuals and families in desperate need of safety and their right to seek protection from persecution. It is especially disappointing that the release of urgently needed funding for COVID testing, treatment, vaccines, and relief has been interrupted by a potential action on the *Public Health and Border Security Act of 2022*. Lawmakers should not insist on including this bill as a harmful amendment to the COVID-19 supplemental which is urgently needed for COVID-19 mitigation abroad and for domestic needs. Politicizing Title 42 is harmful to asylum seekers and communities at home. We urge you to depoliticize and decouple Title 42 and COVID-19 aid and

legislate on the common good. The promise of working toward the common good has delivered us through the pandemic and can lead us to a better future where we welcome with dignity.

Our faith traditions call us to welcome vulnerable people with warmth and open arms, and we call on members of Congress to do the same. We urge you to fiercely reject this dangerous bill, oppose similar measures, and hold the Biden administration accountable to ending this policy once and for all by May 23rd. As people of faith, we are ready and eager to welcome all people with dignity and urge you to work with the administration to support a comprehensive and clearly-communicated plan to build an equitable, humane, and anti-racist asylum system.

Sincerely,

Faith Organizations

Accompaniment & Sanctuary Coalition Colorado Springs
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Associate, Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, St. Francis Province
Bethany House of Hospitality
Bridges Faith Initiative
Bright Way Zen
Catholic Coalition for Migrants and Immigrants
Central Washington Justice For Our Neighbors
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church Council of Greater Seattle
Church Women United in New York State
Church World Service
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Boston
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Creator Lutheran & SE Portland Youth Collective
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Edgewood United UCC Racial Justice Team
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faith Commons
Fellowship Southwest
First Parish in Concord, MA Immigration Justice Task Force
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
Guadalupe Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
HIAS
Immaculate Heart Community, Commission on Justice for Immigrants & Refugees
Immigration Task Force, Fauntleroy Church
Immigration Task Force, New England Synod, ELCA
Interfaith Campaign for Just Closures
Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service
Interfaith Welcome Coalition-San Antonio
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Jemez Peacemakers
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Justice For Our Neighbors-North Central Texas
Justice for Our Neighbors El Paso
Kino Border Initiative
Lawrence Interfaith Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, Lawrence, KS

Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
Maryknoll Lay Missioners
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic JAPAN
Meriden Congregational Church, UCC
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women-Greater Long Beach & West Orange County
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New York Justice for Our Neighbors, Inc.
Pax Christi New Jersey
Pax Christi New York State
Pax Christi Rhode Island
Pax Christi Southern California
Pax Christi USA
Peace & Justice Committee, Milwaukee Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbytery of the Pacific
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Quixote Center
Raj Khalsa Gurdwara
Rochester, Minnesota Franciscan Sisters and Cojourners
Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ/ NACCE
Salutation-Beargrass Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
School Sisters of St. Francis U.S. Province
Sister Parish Inc.
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Sisters of St. Joseph Boston
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Social Justice Coalition, Central Lutheran Church
South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc
Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ
Srs. of St. Francis of Philadelphia
St Joseph University Parish Refugee and Immigration Committee
St Thomas More, Coralville
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
St. Augustine's Chapel Justice Salon
St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology
St. Francis of Assisi Parish
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ
The Social Justice Committee of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Austin TX
The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society
Trinity Church
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist FaithAction

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
Unity Lutheran Church, Southgate
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Wellington UCC

Faith Leaders and People of Faith

National

Br. Michael Gosch, Clerics of St. Viator
Dr. Sue Smith, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Executive Director Erin McKenney, Just Neighbors Ministry
Mr. Johnny Sears, The Academy for Spiritual Formation
Mr. Johnny Zokovitch, Pax Christi USA
Priscilla Read, Episcopal Peace Fellowship-Palestine Israel Network
Rabbi Joshua Lesser Bridges, Faith Initiative
Rev. Maria Teresa
Rev. Ruben Ortiz, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Rev. Dr. William Lyons, Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Jennifer Butler Coward, Faith in Public Life
Reverend Kendal L. McBroom, The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society
Sister Pat Cormack, Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross
Sister Moira Frawley
Sister Noella Poinsette, Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
Sister Doreen Glynn, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sister Ann Scholz, Leadership Conference of Women Religious
TSSF Dianne Aid, The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice

Arizona

Brother Ignacio Harding ofm, Order of Friars Minor OFM
Elder Lori Bryant, First Christian Church, Tucson
Pastor Sarah Stadler, Grace Lutheran Church
Rev. Randy Mayer, The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ
Sister Tracey Horan, Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Wendy Emmert
Tania Malven

Arkansas

Rev. Dr. William Branch, Presbytery of Arkansas
Rev. Dr. Clint Schneklath, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Ruling Elder Elizabeth Branch, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church

California

Member Susan Kadota, Saints Simon and Jude Parish
Mr. Robert McCoy, St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Ms. JL Angell Presbyterian
Pastor Will McGarvey, East County Shared Ministry
Pastor Rick Fry, Ascension
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Rev. Mary Kay Will, United Methodist Church
Rev. Will McGarvey, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County
Rev. Sheri Randolph, First Congregational United Church of Christ
Rev. Heather Branton, Community Church of Atascadero, UCC
Rev. Emily Lin, Twin Towers UMC

Rev. Mary Jo Bradshaw First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Lompoc
Rev. Heidi Worthen Gamble, Presbytery of the Pacific
Rev. C. Anderson, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Kim Engelmann
Rev. Dr. Myrna Tuttle Myrna Tuttle, First Congregational Church, UCC, Santa Barbara
Reverend James Conn, United Methodist Church & Clergy and Laity United for Economic - Justice
Reverend Lyn Juckniess, Presbytery of San Francisco
Sister Aida Manlucu
Sister Martha Larsen, Mercy Sisters
The Reverend Wilma Reichard, United Church of Christ
Jeffrey Kuan, Claremont School of Theology

Colorado

Mark Meeks, Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church
Rabbi Deborah Bronstein

Connecticut

Sr. Elaine Betoncourt, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Maryann Mueller, Felician Franciscan Sisters

Georgia

Dr. Belle McMaster, Monticello Presbyterian Church

Illinois

Mr. Tom Cordaro, Pax Christi Illinois
Margaret Stiglianese, Roman Catholic
Pastor Lisa Watson-Hill St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Rev. Sara Wohlleb, United Church of Christ
Rev. Carolyn Bavaro, Episcopal Diocese Church
Rev. Josh Ebener, St. Andrew Lutheran Church
Rev. Sally Fritsche, Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign
Rev. Dave Buerstetta, Woodridge United Methodist Church
Sister Benita Coffey OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
Sister Cathy Leamy, SNJM
Sister Mary Ann Penner, Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants

Indiana

Cliff Kindy, Eel River Community Church of the Brethren
Pastor Byrl Shaver, Nappanee Church of the Brethren
Rev. Adrienne Meier, St. Thomas Lutheran Church
Sister Annette Grisley, Oldenburg Franciscans
Sr. Christa Franzer, Sisters of St. Francis

Iowa

Mrs. Edith Jacobsen, First Lutheran Decorah
Sr. Teri Hadro, BVM, Sisters of Charity, BVM

Kentucky

Minister Michelle Carroll FBC, Saint Clair Frankfort
Mr. Curtis Ehrmantraut, Central Christian Church - Justice Team
Rev. Sharon Felton, Faith Baptist Church
Reverend Henry Sneed, jr., Central Christian Church (DOC)

Maryland

Retired Chaplain/Pastoral Counselor Patricia Roop Hollinger, Church of the Brethren/Quaker
Rev. Betty Landis, Saint Stephen ELCA Lutheran

Sister Marie Lucey, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
The Rev. Charles Hoffacker, The Episcopal Church

Massachusetts

CSJA Nancy Papp, CSJA Boston
Jean McKinney CSJ, Sisters of St Joseph of Boston
Mrs. Mary Rita Weschler, The Women's Table, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Rev. David Rinas Messiah, Lutheran Church, Amherst, NH
Rev. Eliot Moss Eliot, St. John's Episcopal Church
Reverend Juliet Bongfeldt, St Peter's Lutheran Church
S. Marilyn McGoldrick, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Sister Barbara Loud, Congregation of Sisters of St
Sister Virginia Kelleher, CSJ
Sister Joanne Gallagher Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Margaret Meyer, Catholic Sister
Sister CArlotta Gilarde, Congregation St. Joseph
Sister Judith Costello, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Sister Mary O'Reilly, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sr. Joanne Solari, CSJ
Jamie Medeiros, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Dorothy Burns, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Sister Mary Gown, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston

Michigan

Dr. George Monsma, Jr. Sherman St, Christian Reformed Church
Ms. Mary Anne Perrone, Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice
Retired Professor of Theology Mark Kraai, New Brunswick Theological Seminary

Minnesota

Ms. Mary Kozmik, St Paul's Monastery
Mr. Stuart Knappmiller, CWS/CVT/Bread for The World

Missouri

Emily Kuttenkuler, Kirkwood United Church of Christ
Carly Garcia, Inter - Faith Committee on Latin America
Rev. Kim Mason, First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Sister Francine Koehler School Sisters of Notre Dame

Nebraska

Andrea Paret, Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church
CLM Sandra Sypherd, Grace United Methodist Church
Mr. Paul Few, Nebraska Disciples Men

New Hampshire

Mr. David Blair, Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham
Sister Rosemary Burnham, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

New Jersey

Dr. Joseph Chuman, New York Society for Ethical Culture
Mrs. Michelle Boddorff, St. Teresa of Calcutta parish
Rev. Charles Loflin, Unitarian Universalist FaithAction NJ
Sister Eleanor Goekler, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

New Mexico

Ms. Martha Phillips, First Congregational United Church of Christ
Sister Joan Brown, OSF, New Mexico & El Paso Interfaith Power and Light

New York

Br. Michael Potvin Frost, Order of Franciscan Hermits
DR. Mazeda Uddin, South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and training Inc
Mr. Jerry Rivers, Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ/ North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Mrs. Mary Smith, Secular Franciscan Order
Rabbi Esther Lederman, Union for Reform Judaism
Rev. Merle Showers, University United Methodist Church
Rev. John R Long, First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Lam Hua, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
Rev. John Paarlberg, NY State Council of Churches
Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert
Sister Patricia Ryan, Maryknoll Sisters of St Dominic
Sister Helene O'Sullivan Maryknoll Sisters
Sister Nancy Fackner, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph

North Carolina

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Rev. Dr Douglas Wingeier, United Methodist Church
Rev. Kimberly Wyatt, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Field Personnel
Reverend Kendal L. McBroom, Turner's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
The Rev. John Sosnowski, The Episcopal Church

Ohio

Rev. Suzanne Allen, United Methodist
Rev. Paula Snyder Belousek, Salem Mennonite Church
Sister Agnesmarie LoPorto, SND
Sr. Delouise Menges, Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, IN

Oregon

Chaplain (Ret.) Catherine Elia, St. Ignatius
Rev. Domyo Burk, Bright Way Zen

Pennsylvania

Bonnie Rhoads Church of the Brethren
Ms. Marge Vance, Nationalities Services Center
Pope Francis Mary McKenna, Holy Cross Parish, Philadelphia, PA
Rev. Paul Hagedorn, Tabernacle Lutheran Church
Rev. Thomas Lang, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Rev. Sandra Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Rev. DeAnn Books, Shiloh Lutheran
Rev. Jennifer Hope -Tringali, Tree 4 Hope
Reverend Mary Tiebout, Fellowship of Sussex County
Sister Suzanne Susany
Sr. Betty McVeigh, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia

Rhode Island

Rev. Santiago Rodriguez, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

South Carolina

Sister Paula Gallant

Tennessee

Br. Christopher (Dale) Anesi, OSFM
The Rev. Francisco Garcia, St. Augustine's Episcopal Chapel

Texas

Cantor Vicky Glikin, Temple Emanu
Elder Linds Morrow, FCC Denton, TX
Executive Director Almas Muscatwalla, Faith Forward Dallas
Linda Reid
Minister Cameron Vickrey, Fellowship Southwest
Mr John Ginley Asso Religious Sisters Mercy
Ms. Karen Morrow, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Ms. Jane Van Praag, President, Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)
Ms. Linda Abramson Evans, Congregation Beth El Binah
Pastor Samuel Voth Schrag, Peace Mennonite Church
Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Faith Commons
Rabbi Kimberly Herzog Cohen, Temple Emanu
Rabbi Brian Zimmerman, Congregation Beth El
Rev. Karen Fry Center for Spiritual Living Dallas
Rev. Heather Mustain, Wilshire Baptist Church
Rev. Chris Terry Chria Terry, Centers for Spiritual Living
Rev. Valarie Englert Valarie, First UMC Garland TX
Rev. Carrie Graham, The Church Lab
Rev. Ross West Wilshire Baptist Church
Rev. Patrick Littlefield, Sun creek United Methodist Church
Rev. Phillip Dieke, White Rock UMC
Rev. Holly Bandel, First United Methodist Church, Dallas
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Rev. Dr. Charles Aaron Perkins, School of Theology/SMU
Rev. Dr. S. Benjamin Brown, Kingdom Life Church & Ministries
Rev. Victoria Robb Powers, University Park United Methodist Church
Reverend Wendy Fenn, PCUSA
Sister Sharon Altendorf
Carolyn Riddle, St. Louis King of France

Vermont

Venerable Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul-Episcopal

Virginia

Ethical Culture Leader Randall Best, Northern Virginia Ethical Society
Mrs. Jennifer Larson, West Side Christian Church
Rabbi Cantor Ellen Jaffe-Gill, Tidewater Chavurah
Rev. Juan Garcia, Primera Iglesia Bautista Newport News
Rev. Daniel Velez-Rivera, Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church-Iglesia San Gabriel
Rev. Marha Sims Grace, Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rev. Coretha Loughridge, Fairview Christian Church
Rev. John Loughridge, Christian Church (Disciples)
Rev. Dr. Greg Smith, LUCHA Ministries, Inc.

Washington

Deacon Dennis Duffell, Pax Christi Northwest
Dianne Aid, TSSF, The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice
Dr. Bill Robinson, Whitworth University
Ms. Rosemary Blakemore, Journey Christian Church, Seattle
Pastor Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans
Pr. Josh Stromberg-Wojcik, El Camino de Emaús Lutheran Church
Sr. Pat Millen OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Washington, DC

Ms. Marie Dennis, Pax Christi International

Wisconsin

Pastor Frederick Trost, United Church of Christ

Rev. Alexander Jacobs, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Rev. Jeffrey Dodson, First Congregational Church UCC

Rev. Dr. Janet Wolfe, First Presbyterian, Marshfield, WI

Rev. Dr. Frederick Trost, UCC

Sister Maryann McMahon, OP, Dominican Sisters and Associates of Racine, WI

Sister Kathleen Slesar, OP, Dominican Sisters and Associates of Racine, WI

Sister Lisa Kane, OP, Dominican Sisters and Associates of Racine, WI

Sr. Frances Hoffman, Racine Dominican Sister