



A NEW BEGINNING



National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights looks to a new era of leadership with renewed optimism for human rights.

The Day One executive actions and immigration legislative proposal of the newly inaugurated Biden-Harris administration hold great promise for our nation's transition away from the nightmare of the last four years.

NNIRR joins our partners from across all sectors—grassroots organizations, labor, faith groups, “dreamers” and others—in welcoming the new administration and this significant opportunity to undo multiple cruel, anti-immigrant policies and practices: the separation of children from families and holding them in cages; the obliteration of due process at the border; the detention and deportation of thousands of migrant children and families; the ramping up of the military occupation of the borderlands, not to mention the hated and wasteful expansion of the border wall.

Yesterday's initial set of executive orders provide much needed relief and represent a commitment to abolishing Trump's egregious immigration policies, including a moratorium on deportations, an end to all travel bans, and reunification of families separated at the border.

“Stopping the construction of the border wall, extending DACA protections, ceasing deportations and reorienting interior enforcement priorities are necessary first steps towards reversing the climate of fear and hate fomented by the previous administration; and there's so much more to be done to address the crisis of migrant deaths at the US-Mexico border and create regular migration channels for those seeking safety in the U.S.”

—Alma Maquitico, Co-Director El Paso Office, NNIRR

“We understand that the new administration faces unprecedented challenges—the public health crisis, a global economy in shambles, and accelerating threats from climate change. President Biden's commitment to decisive steps to halt the deadly course of the pandemic, working to root out racial injustice, and addressing the rising inequities are also important policies that impact immigrant and refugee communities who need to be part of an inclusive recovery, both economically and socially.”

—Jennifer Ferrigno, Co-Director Oakland Office, NNIRR

NNIRR welcomes the administration's proposal to provide a pathway to citizenship for the country's undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S. A broad program to quickly “regularize” the status of millions of immigrant workers and their families is a top priority for immigration reform advocates, and there is increasing Congressional support for an “expedited” process for DACA and TPS holders and essential workers. “There is certainly ample reason

to fast-track regularization of status for the millions who have been denied this opportunity for decades,” stated Ferrigno.

While we are aware of the many challenges in passing such legislation, we desperately need bold action to reshape long-standing immigration policies that have criminalized immigrant communities and undermined their health, safety, labor rights, and overall welfare.

Inspired by the UN Global Compact for Migration, which NNIRR helped to shape, we will strive to re-envision an immigration system that places migrant's human rights at the center of immigration and border policy. NNIRR will continue to work for immigration policy reforms that keep families together, decriminalize migrants, ensure immigrant workers' rights, and seek solutions to the root causes and drivers of migration.

“We look forward to an immigration system that restores protections to dreamers, and those with temporary status, and extends protections to the essential workforce of healthcare workers, caregivers, domestic workers, farmworkers, food services workers, who need ample social protections and equal access to justice,” said Maquitico.

NNIRR urges the Biden Administration to:

- Make border governance consistent with human rights, and ensure that all border procedures are effective, humane and non-discriminatory.
- Ensure a fair and robust asylum program for those seeking freedom and safety from life or-death situations.
- Address the crisis of migrant deaths in consultation with forensic teams and civil society organizations who are supporting the families of missing loved ones.
- Engage in multilateral and collaborative approaches within the global community, with an emphasis on establishing expeditious regular migration pathways that uphold human rights, ensure workers’ rights and address the root causes and drivers of migration.
- Address the large-scale racial inequities and abuses against black and brown migrants within the current immigration system that exacerbate the already harrowing path towards citizenship and asylum status.

The new administration has an important role to play in breaking up the hostile, racist xenophobic rhetoric that accompanied the hundreds of anti-immigrant policies and practices of the past four years. NNIRR calls on the Biden-Harris administration to boldly take up this task as part of its commitment to unify the country.



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FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

