



January 20, 2021

Dear President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris,

Puente Human Rights Movement (Puente) congratulates you on winning the people's vote. Puente worked tirelessly in 2020 to get out the vote in Arizona among migrant communities and other people directly impacted by human rights abuses. Our people voted for leaders who they hope will not only undo the harm that Mr. Trump committed against Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, but leaders who will also take bold action to change the course of immigration policy in the United States, centering the dignity, human rights, and lived experiences of migrant communities.

We write to you today in regards to your immigration policy platform with six key demands:

1. **A blanket moratorium on deportation and enforcement activities.** Your campaign platform included a pledge to a 100-day moratorium on deportations. You must not walk back this promise to our people. We ask that this moratorium include not only deportations but also enforcement activities like removals, apprehensions, and arrests. Migrants should not be held in cages. As you know, COVID-19 has made the situation at detention camps even more dangerous. On top of the medical neglect and abuse that we know occurs in CBP and ICE detention camps, COVID-19 is now killing our people. We demand that you release all people who are held in ICE and CBP detention; empty those cages!
2. **A thorough and wide-ranging investigation into the Department of Homeland Security.** DHS is notorious not only in our communities, but across the country and the world, for violating the human rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Under Trump, the United States became known as a country that is cruel, inhumane, and abusive to innocent people and children who are only seeking opportunity and freedom -- the values that this country was supposedly founded on. DHS has committed endless atrocities against migrants, including separating parents from children, performing unwanted medical procedures on women without consent, sexual abuse, and much more -- all without accountability. You must launch an investigation into DHS, and that investigation must center the voices and experiences of people who have been directly impacted by DHS's human rights violations.
3. **End Operation Streamline and the criminalization of migration.** Immigration is not a crime. You must end the Trump era policies that make border crossing a criminal offense, and end all prosecution of such "offenses." All programs that criminalize migration must be ended. Migration is part of the human condition and should not be punished; migrants have the right to freedom of movement. According to international human rights law, migrants are entitled to the same human rights as everyone else, including protection against arbitrary arrest or detention, protection against torture or inhuman treatment, family rights, and non-refoulement.
4. **Abolish the Secure Communities program, 278(g) agreements, and all programs facilitating information sharing between local and federal offices.** Our communities do not feel safe in their own homes, workplaces, or on their own streets, because of programs



like S-Comm and the racial profiling they invite. Police and ICE collaboration must end. You have pledged to end the 278(g) agreements entered under Trump, but we demand an end to *all* existing 278(g) agreements and a blanket ban on their future use. S-Comm and programs like it are a drain on resources and are harmful for our communities.

5. **Terminate all contracts with private prison companies, for both detention and so-called “alternatives to detention.”** We applaud your commitment to ending all contracts with private prison companies. Private prisons and detention centers are notorious for abusing people and stripping them of their dignity and human rights. We have witnessed first-hand in Arizona how private prisons frequently violate human rights law, from medical abuse to physical and mental torture of people who are incarcerated. We demand that this commitment includes ending all contracts with companies that supply technologies used for so-called “alternatives to detention” such as costly ankle-bracelets -- technologies that our communities are forced to pay for or face prison.
6. **End the surveillance of Black, Brown, and immigrant communities.** Black, Brown, and immigrant communities are systemically targeted and criminalized by the police and state violence -- simply for the color of their skin -- leading to family separation, incarceration, and even the murder of our people. In recent days it has been made more clear than ever that the threat to American democracy is not from Black, Brown, immigrant, or Indigenous communities. We demand that you cut funding for DHS biometrics and surveillance programs, and end contracts with corporations that build technology used in DHS enforcement. You must end the pervasive surveillance and tracking of people who are impacted by the criminal justice system -- this surveillance and data collection violates civil liberties and human rights.

It is thanks to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and immigrant communities that you have a true opportunity -- with both your executive powers and a new Congressional majority -- to create meaningful change in regards to immigration policy. Migrant communities deserve to live with dignity, respect, and their human rights upheld. Our six demands outlined above are aimed at stopping abuses and giving our people a chance to live their lives with justice and freedom. You must not only undo what Trump has done -- and come out from the shadow of deporter-in-chief former President Obama -- but you must also make lasting change that provides opportunities for healing for our people and returns the United States to its rightful place as a country made of, by, and for immigrants.

Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns. We would love an opportunity to speak with your team about how to build immigration policy that respects human rights and dignity.

Sincerely,

Puente Human Rights Movement

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