

June 17, 2021

Dear President Biden,

We hope this finds you well. We are a group of immigrants and refugees placing our hope in you and your government. Thank you in advance for your kind attention.

We are members of HRI Connect, a Dallas-based group of immigrants and refugees working to build a community where everyone feels welcomed and embraced regardless of who we are, what we look like, or how well we speak English. We celebrate that we all build this country where we live, no matter where we were born.

We are all clients (or the people who love them) at the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, seeking protection under the U.S.'s immigration laws. We meet every month to talk about the struggles we face and decide how we want to improve them together. One of the major struggles we are concerned with are the immigration backlogs. (We are also working to expand access to affordable healthcare in DFW. We were proud to recently launch a website that our communities can use to find the healthcare they need.)

We are so grateful for the recent announcements that your Administration will make improvements to help the people stuck in the U Visa backlog, and will strengthen gender-based asylum. We also have seen the news about your Administration's "D.H.S. Plan to Restore Trust in Our Legal Immigration System." We were so happy to learn that addressing the immigration backlogs is key to your plan. At our last meeting, several of us decided it was important to share with you what this news on immigration means to us. We want to make sure you can hear from those on whose behalf you are fighting:

- Dear President Biden, we, along with our families at HRI Connect, have been waiting for our immigration cases to be resolved, and the wait has been too long and painful; discouragement wears on us at times. Even so, we have faith that your administration could help us resolve this problem of a long and hard wait. Making the process much shorter so that we can stabilize our legal status in this country we call home. May God bless you. Thank you very much.
  - B.N., mom of 2 whose U Visa application has been pending since January 2016
- Well, I am Rosa, mother of 4 children. G. is 16 years old, E. 13, L. 11 and B. is almost 7 years old. We suffered a lot of domestic violence at the hands of the father of my children. I have been sent my work visa, thank you Mr. President, we are very proud that you can make a big difference. Please, give residency to all us mothers who are fighting for our families. We are hardworking people. All we want is stability in this country. Help us, please, we ask for your help.
- Dear President Biden, I would like to emphasize a great concern on medical care for people that can't afford a routine well check-up. Many poor communities don't have the resources or access to healthcare. It is very important not to have a backlog and prioritize healthcare to create a supportive environment and resilient communities.
  - Sandra, mom of 2 who was recently granted a U Visa

- Immigration backlog—what it means to have my adjustment of status approved: A sense of safety and security for my daughter and me. Freedom. Job Security, with this I can provide for my daughter and keep a roof over our head. Better access to health and social services.
  - B.T., a mom of 1 who was granted asylum and is waiting for her green card application to be approved
- Living every day without knowing what will happen to you and your family in this country makes you feel so stressed and desolate. “Time” becomes so important to end that fear of being deported and separated from your family.
  - K.D., a mom of 1 who was able to remove the conditions on her green card under the Violence Against Women Act
- Refugees and asylum seekers should not be seen as a burden to the country. They are great resources for the economy growth of the country. They come up with innovations, filling up the vacancies in jobs other people don’t like to do, professional workers. Immigration is also good in terms of cultural diversity and strengthening further the US democracy.
  - R.M., a husband and father whose application for political asylum has been pending before USCIS since January 2017
- To me, reducing the backlog means to accelerate the process for better safety and stability for immigrants. “Mental safety and stability,” for that person who really needs it. What this person’s future will be, it all comes from there, from the roots. “Immigration,” from here stems the future of the family. It is known we all are human beings, regardless of where we’re from. The only thing that limits us are our borders.
  - F.S., a husband and father whose application for political asylum has been pending before the immigration court since 2017
- To: Mr. President Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, May God bless you in the responsibility that you carry on your shoulders, but all our faith is in you, and you have the trust and hope of everyone in the nation.

Mr. President, and Vice President, a fragile country awaits you, but you will make the right decisions to steady it once again. In the name of God, I ask for forgiveness, for entering illegally into the nation of the United States. But I had no other option, but from the moment that I have been in the country I have respected the law, trying to be an honest person and to teach my daughters to be honest and hardworking people. So, from the moment I entered the United States of America, I have done honest work.

Mr. President, I believe that this is the moment to take into account the sacrifices of all us immigrants, that we work exposing ourselves in these times of the pandemic. We are the ones who went out to work, facing the risk, for mutual benefit, but we are the unmentioned ones getting this country running. The country is very vulnerable and this is your opportunity to Congress and the House of Representatives for support. To reestablish the country, you need to ask both parties and leaders for help, and for the economy to recover, we are the number 1

option.

Just as a strong tree with strong branches needs care from the very bottom. We are 11 million illegal people that contribute to the country paying taxes and helping the economy by working, consuming, and many don't even receive tax refunds from the IRS although we work.

The majority of us are people that don't have a lot, and we know how our countries are in these times, and considering the way we live in the shadows, we weren't able to be adopted, and most of us have been here for over 10 years, maybe 20, not having seen our parents or our children, and some of our parents have died.

I would like you to take us into account when you propose the bill, taking into account the people who have been here for some time, and that there are truly good and hardworking people. We are the labor force for the jobs that no one wants to do, so think about how the economy will recover all of the funds that were used for the stimulus. People who have been living in the U.S. for the longest, who are willing to pay any fine for having entered the country. These people contribute by buying houses, cars, paying their own medical costs, paying their rent, their food, their means of communication.

It is a shame unfortunately this money is going to fall in the hands of delinquents and mafias. Out of need to see their parents and children, they resort to smugglers, throwing away that amount of money that could reestablish the country. In these times the highest rate to cross the border illegally is around \$10,000.

Please, in the name of Jesus, I ask that in your immigration reform you take into account those of us who have already been in the country for a long time, contributing. There are good people that do not have a criminal record and all that they have is the responsibility to work in order to provide food for their family.

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. President. God bless America.

- M.A., mom of a U Visa holder seeking a pathway to status

Thank you for all you have done. The changes you are making have real impacts on so many people's lives, including our own. Every day under the last Administration was a nightmare. Thank you for using your power to reduce the backlogs and push for a more just immigration system for us all. We are sending you our strength to keep pushing.

Sincerely,

The members of HRI Connect

c/o Kali Cohn, Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, 2801 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75204