May 18, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

As organizations committed to protect and advance the reproductive and human rights of all women and their families, we write to express serious concerns regarding the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)’s continued use of deportation raids as an immigration enforcement tactic against the most vulnerable individuals – including women and children. Our organizations share the common aim of ensuring that all people have access to quality, affordable health care, including reproductive health care – regardless of who they are or where they come from. Deportation raids undermine this goal, threatening the health and dignity of women and families in need of care. We therefore urge DHS to immediately stop the use of such raids on families and halt the forced deportation of Central American refugees.

There is no more basic human need than access to safe, quality health care and no person or community should be put in a position of fear for accessing it. We are deeply concerned that the raids on women and children will do exactly that, not just for the targeted individuals but also for the communities to which they belong. Undocumented individuals in the U.S. frequently report forgoing or delaying care because they fear that they will be reported to immigration officials. As a result, conditions that are easily addressed through prevention or early treatment are more likely to progress into serious health issues. The aggressive use of deportation raids only magnifies this threat. It contributes to a climate of panic and fear, placing an even greater chilling effect on access to basic health care services for the undocumented, their families, and their communities. This adverse impact on health care access is, in turn, likely to exacerbate the already significant barriers to care that immigrants, especially women, face.

The fact that DHS’s current series of raids have targeted mainly women and children seeking protection, is an even greater cause for alarm. The Central American refugees targeted by the raids fled to the U.S. for their survival due to violence in their countries of origin. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable as they attempt to escape a region with the highest murder rate in the world. Reportedly, more than 80 percent are

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raped during their journey⁴, many taking birth control to avoid unintended pregnancies. The Administration should respond by taking steps to ensure the health and safety of these asylum seekers, not by forcing them to return to the violent and dangerous conditions from which they fled. Moreover, by instilling fear among immigrant families, particularly women and children, DHS risks erecting additional barriers to obtaining basic health care for populations that already face serious challenges in accessing health care services.

Thus, the undersigned organizations urge DHS to immediately halt and reverse the implementation of its planned deportation raids. Our nation’s immigration laws should not be enforced through tactics that undermine the availability of lifesaving health care, including reproductive health care, for the families of citizens and noncitizens alike.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers In Action
Alianza Americas
Alliance for Citizenship
Alliance for Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Fraternity USA
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA
Asian Law Alliance
ASPIRA Association
ASPIRE-LA
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP) at the Urban Justice Center
Austin Jewish Voice for Peace
Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera
AVANCE
Brevard NOW
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California NOW
California Partnership
California Primary Care Association

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CARECEN DC
CASA
Casa de Esperanza
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for New Community
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
Central American Resource Center-LA
Colectiva Legal del Pueblo
Community Health Partnership
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Cuban American National Council, Inc. d.b.a. CNC
Detention Watch Network
Dreamers of Virginia
El Centro Hispano, Inc.
Families for Freedom
Families USA
Farmworker Justice
First Focus
Florida Immigrant Coalition, Inc. (FLIC)
Forward Together
Franciscan Action Network
Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP)
Grassroots Leadership
Greater Reading Immigration Project (GRIP)
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Hondurans Against AIDS
Immigrant Defense Project
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Taskforce, Southwest Pennsylvania Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Justice Strategies
La Clinica del Pueblo
La Union del Pueblo Entero
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Latin America Working Group
Latino Commission on AIDS
Latino Victory Project
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
Legal Aid Justice Center
MAIZ
Make the Road New York
MALDEF
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mason DREAMers
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Mi Familia Vota
Miami Workers Center
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women Inc.
National Congress of Black Women
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)
National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP)
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Organization for Women (NOW) First Virtual Chapter: Young Feminists and Allies
National Organization for Women -NJ
National Organization for Women, Centre County, PA
National Organization for Women, Missouri
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NC National Organization for Women
New Florida Majority
New York Abortion Access Fund
New York Immigration Coalition
North Carolina Justice Center
Northern New Jersey Chapter, National Organization for Women
NW Resistance/Resistencia al NW
OneAmerica
Organización Hondureña Francisco Morazan
Our Family Coalition
Pennsylvania National Organization for Women (PA NOW)
People For the American Way
Pilsen Alliance
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Power U
Presente.org
Public Justice Center
Puentes: Advocacy, Counseling & Education
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Reformed Church of Highland Park
Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Salvadoran American National Network (SANN)
San Gabriel Valley/Whittier National Organization for Women
San Jose Peace and Justice Center
SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)
Speak Hispanic
Surge Reproductive Justice
Survivors Pathway Organization
Tahirih Justice Center
Taos Refugee and Immigrant Network
The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
United Families
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United We Dream (UWD)
VACOLAO - Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Voces de la Frontera
Voices for Utah Children
Voto Latino
Voz Hispana
We Belong Together
West Suburban NOW
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, Texas)
Women Working Together USA
Women's Refugee Commission
Working Partnerships USA
Young Women United
9to5 California
9to5 Colorado
9to5 Georgia
9to5 Wisconsin
9to5, National Association of Working Women
CC: Alejandro Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
Sarah Saldaña, Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement