

April 22, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

We, the undersigned organizations, call on our elected leaders to collectively and forcefully denounce the use of dehumanizing and demagogic rhetoric about immigrants and urge other civic leaders around the country to follow suit. There are very serious dangers in normalizing language, such as saying that undocumented immigrants are an “infestation,” “animals,” or “not people.” These are profoundly vile and dangerous words. Elected officials and leaders around our country have a responsibility to denounce this dangerous rhetoric whenever they hear it and should never engage in it themselves.

Again and again, [experts and researchers have shown](#) that dehumanization is connected to, and a precondition for, discrimination, oppression, violence, and, in extreme cases, murder or even genocide of an outgroup. Dehumanization is often a predictor and a primer of oppression, warming people up to the idea that oppressing another group is acceptable because they are a threat or not fully human.

Saying that immigrants are engaged in a hostile invasion of the United States or that there is a plot by elites to replace “real” Americans with new immigrants is not just wrong; it is dangerous. This kind of rhetoric, when left unchallenged by our highest leaders, has predictable and deadly consequences. The murderers convicted of mass shootings at a Buffalo grocery store in 2022, an El Paso Walmart in 2019, and a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018 all claimed they were repelling an invasion of immigrants. This language can no longer be treated as merely harmless words, but rather the kind of rhetoric that all leaders share a responsibility to confront.

Immigration is important and demands earnest discussion and debate amongst our public leaders. While vehement policy disagreements are welcome, we implore our elected officials to not only condemn the use of demagogic and dehumanizing rhetoric but to also encourage other public leaders around the country to refrain from using it. We cannot allow prejudiced and inflammatory language to dominate critical policy conversations, nor to threaten the safety and liberty of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Signed,

America's Voice Education Fund
#WelcomeWithDignity
Acacia Center for Justice
ACLU People Power Fairfax
Adhikaar
African Communities Together (ACT)
Alianza Americas
American Humanist Association
American Muslim Voice Foundation
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Americans for Immigrant Justice
Arab American Institute (AAI)
ARISE Adelante
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asians for Collective Liberation in Spokane
ASISTA Immigration Assistance
Austin Region Justice for Our Neighbors
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Border Vigil of Eagle Pass
Borderlands Resource Initiative
Bridges Faith Initiative
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition
Carolina Jews for Justice
CASA
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS)
Central American Resource Center
Central American Resource Center of Northern California - CARECEN SF
Chispa
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition on Human Needs
Communities in Resistance
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
Community Change
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Cornell University
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Estrella del Paso (Formerly DMRS)
FAITH IN TEXAS
FEA Foundation Ministries
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project

Florida Immigrant Coalition
Florida Rising
Food Justice DMV
Forward Latino
Franciscan Action Network
Frontera de Cristo
GALEO & GALEO Impact Fund
Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
Global Refuge
Greater Spokane Progress
Habonim Dror North America
HIAS
Hope Border Institute
Human Rights First
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigration Hub
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
International Rescue Committee
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Justice Action Center
Justice For Our Neighbors North Central Texas
Justice in Motion
Kino Border Initiative
La Raza Centro Legal San Francisco
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
League of Conservation Voters
Make the Road CT
Make the Road Nevada
Make the Road New Jersey
Make the Road New York
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Mauritanian Network for Human Rights
Miami Freedom Project for Democracy, Inc.
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Multifaith Voices for Peace and justice (Palo Alto, CA)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Network of Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Partnership for New Americans
Nebraska Appleseed
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice
New York Immigration Coalition
NH Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees
North Carolina Immigration Law and Justice Center
Oxfam America
People Power United
People's Action
Poder Latinx
Presente.org
Progress Virginia
Project On Government Oversight
Rabbinical Assembly
Refugee Council USA
Regina Weiss
REV UP NC
RuralOrganizing.org
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)
Sin Barreras Without Barriers, Inc.
SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network)
Social Workers for Immigration Justice
Sojourners
Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC)
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Tahirih Justice Center
Team Brownsville Inc
Texas Civil Rights Project
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Lands Council Climate Justice Program
The Rhizome Center for Migrants
The Sidewalk School
The Sikh Coalition
The Workers Circle
UndocuBlack Network

UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
United We Dream
Value our Families
Venice Resistance
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Voces de la Frontera
Voces Unidas RGV
Voto Latino
Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network
Washington Office on Latin America
Western States Center
Win Without War
Witness at the Border
Women's Refugee Commission
Woori Juntos