



*Via email*

December 1, 2020

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President-Elect

Dear President-Elect Biden:

On behalf of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., or CLINIC, we congratulate you and Vice President-Elect Harris and welcome you to your new positions of leadership in our country. As an organization whose mission is to advocate for the rights and dignity of immigrants, we are elated by the historic moment and future that Vice President-Elect Harris ushers in as a daughter of immigrants.

CLINIC represents the nation's largest network of nonprofit immigration legal services providers, made up of more than 380 programs across 48 states and the District of Columbia. CLINIC's work is informed by this network, rooted in our Catholic identity and guided by our team of nationally regarded in-house experts. As a national leader and top strategist in administrative advocacy, CLINIC is a first responder to immigration law and policy changes, whether fighting to protect immigrant rights or working side-by-side with the government to build the structures that offer welcome, safety, security and family unity to those seeking to make the United States their home.

Since CLINIC's founding in 1988, we have worked closely and in partnership with the agencies that administer our immigration system. Under previous administrations, we worked to increase governmental efficiencies and responsiveness, enhance national security, promote business innovation and strengthen due process of law. For example, we worked very closely with the Obama administration on the implementation of DACA. Under the current administration, CLINIC directly engaged with the government, formally responded to regulatory proposals through the federal rulemaking process, provided technical expertise to members of Congress and investigatory bodies, led campaigns and coalitions, litigation, outreach and education, trainings and resources, and more.

Given the vulnerability of our immigrant communities in the United States and at our Southern border, we urge you to include the protection of their rights as a top priority for your transition planning. We urge you and the leadership that you choose who will head these key agencies to follow the lead of our Holy Father's teachings. He challenges us to utilize this extraordinary time in our history to envision new and different systems to achieve justice and address the disparities in our country.

We look forward to meeting with you to share our expertise and support as you start your work on these important issues. While CLINIC works on a wide array of issues, we suggest that we begin on a few critical issues in the early months of your administration:

- **Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness: CLINIC has worked closely with partners and communities across the United States to ensure that the Liberian community is protected and receives status under the LRIF Act.** On January 10, 2021, thousands of Liberians in the

U.S. will fall out of status and risk deportation and family separation due to the Trump administration's flawed implementation of the program, compounded by COVID-19. We urge the Biden administration to designate Deferred Enforced Departure, or DED, for Liberia on day one – backdated to Jan. 1, 2021 -- to restore protection to this vulnerable population and to work with Congress to re-open and fix this vital program.

- **Temporary Protected Status: CLINIC has been a particular leader on this issue in both advocacy and litigation. Our network represents thousands of TPS holders and their family members who are vulnerable and in need of immediate protection and stability.** Given the dire consequences for these populations and for their countries, we urge the Biden administration to designate DED for the Bahamas, Cameroon, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen on day one.
- **Remain in Mexico: CLINIC's presence on the ground in Ciudad Juárez gives us a particular expertise on the challenges faced by thousands of vulnerable men, women and children fleeing for their lives and seeking protection at our southern border.** Given that expertise, we look forward to sharing why the program must be immediately ended and to providing concrete suggestions for pathways and services to process and protect asylum seekers.
- **Enforcement: Our network represents detainees and their family members seeking protection in the United States.** As such, we see the devastating effects that COVID-19 has had on immigrants in U.S. detention centers. We have also seen how COVID has been exported to other countries through deportations. In order to stem the tide and protect men, women and children from the virus and possible death, we urge you to release detainees, call a moratorium on future immigration detention and halt deportations until standards of dignity and safety can be ensured.
- **Muslim and Africa Bans: CLINIC and our affiliates represent thousands of visa-eligible men, women and children for admission to the United States.** As such, we have seen up close the devastating consequences on families, communities and businesses caused by these bans. We urge you to immediately repeal the categorical bans against majority Muslim and/or African countries.
- **White House Task Force on Separated Children and Families: CLINIC has worked closely with families separated under the Trump administration. We have provided direct legal services and support after they have been released to family members and communities.** As Catholic men and women –many of us parents – we feel a particularly strong commitment to these men, women and children. We urge the Biden administration to immediately designate resources and reunite these families. We also urge you to develop a reparations plan given the long-term and likely permanent social, emotional and psychological damage suffered by those whose rights were violated by the family-separation policy.
- **White House Task Force on Black Immigrants: CLINIC applauds the Biden administration's clear commitment to dismantling anti-Black and other systemic racism in America. To be fully comprehensive, that essential work must consider immigrants of color. We urge you to form a White House Task Force to examine and address issues affecting Black immigrants.**
- **Rescinding Trump-era anti-immigrant policies:** In addition to the above high priority and urgent issues, the Biden administration must engage in repealing the many anti-immigrant policies put in place by the previous administration. These include attacks on access to asylum, decreases in access to immigration benefits, legal services, and more.

CLINIC looks forward to sharing detailed policy recommendations on the above during the transition period and first 100 days.

Again, we hope to meet with you in the weeks ahead and stand ready to assist in the work of rebuilding and creating a just and humane immigration system. To coordinate a meeting or for any questions, please contact Jill Marie Bussey, CLINIC's Advocacy Director, at [jbussey@cliniclegal.org](mailto:jbussey@cliniclegal.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anna Marie Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Marie Gallagher  
Executive Director