



Dear Friend,

Bridges Faith Initiative is excited to share that our 501c3 status was formally approved, while we had a provisional status that allowed donations to be deducted; this step is an important one on our way to becoming a leading faith advocacy organization advancing just immigration policy and civilian security.

Our work is essential during a time when President Biden is proposing his Build Back Better Plan with resources to establish a just pathway for citizenship. As faith leaders and members of religious communities, in addition to sharing the tactical and strategic points of why such a pathway benefits the country, we must also add the visionary, ethical and justice-seeking perspectives.

The vital connection between global civilian security and immigration has been demonstrated once again so plainly in the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The precarious situation of civilians and the need for asylum is more real than ever.

We must be stewards of the soul of our country and remind Washington of the hope that we have for this country to realize. Ensuring dignity, safety, and support for immigrants, refugees, and asylees is a measure of our well-being as a country.

Thank you for raising your voice alongside ours as we continue to demonstrate the faith community stands for a just immigration approach!

Our achievements so far!

As mentioned above, we have finalized our 501c3 status thanks to the support pro bono staff of Kilpatrick Stockton. We are especially grateful to Tamar Caldas, Chris Gattuso, and Ben Barkley. During the challenging weeks of the Afghanistan withdrawal, we worked diligently to bring two Afghan journalists and their families safely to the United States. We partnered with the New York Times and the U.S. State Department to bring all ten of them here and supported them closely on the ground. After a brief stay in Mexico, the families arrived in the U.S during the second week of September and are now resettling in Texas.

We have been advocating with both the Biden Administration and Congress to end the misuse of the Title 42 policy. Title 42 is being misused to expel immigrants at the border, especially Haitian immigrants. We signed onto an amicus brief initiated by the ACLU. All of us who signed onto the lawsuit just recently celebrated success as the judge found that expelling migrants and asylum

seekers were both immoral and illegal. This fight is not over as the Biden Administration is appealing the judgment.

BFI has started a bi-weekly Sri Lanka update to Congress. Our work in this area is vitally important. If you would like to also receive these updates, please sign up here: <https://www.bridgesfaithinitiative.org/ending-mass-atrocities/>

What we are working on

A Path to citizenship and to end to anti-Blackness at the border

We are advocating strongly for Congress to provide a pathway to citizenship, to dreamers, TPS holders, farmworkers, and essential workers, in the Build Back Better Budget Reconciliation bill that it is being worked on now.

The Biden administration is not upholding U.S. laws and due process at the border by deporting thousands of Haitians who are at Del Rio, without individual assessments. The U.S. has declared Haiti a country that is unsafe to return to and is only deporting the Haitians illegally because it does not want to face a political backlash from its anti-immigrant opponents. We are working to end this anti-Blackness in the immigration sphere especially at the border.

Civilian security through closing Guantanamo.

In our work to end torture and end wars closing Guantanamo Bay prison is paramount. The U.S. government's approval of the torture and lack of due process within Guantanamo has threatened the rule of law all over the world. We are working with coalitions to advocate that the Biden Administration close the prison as laid out in this article: <https://www.justsecurity.org/78166/there-is-a-way-to-close-guantanamo/>

Support accountability to prevent the recurrence of mass atrocities in Sri Lanka.

At the end of September through October, the United Nations will be discussing the Human Rights issues of Sri Lanka. Also, Congress will be deciding on foreign aid for 2022.

We are working on creating awareness of the dire human rights situation in Sri Lanka and asking the U.S. to review its foreign aid, include human rights benchmarks and sanction individuals involved in torture.

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Thank you for reading, giving, and taking action with us.

Rabbi Joshua Lesser
and the BFI Team