



Bridges Faith Initiative

October 2022 Newsletter

We are excited to share a campaign victory that is bringing us closer to our vision of a just and humane immigration system! **Bridges Faith Initiative (BFI) joined an *El Refugio* initiative, to successfully restore some visitation rights at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia.** This Detention Center is known for its shameful record of abuse and neglect of immigrants. Immigrant women detained at this location have accused medical staff of forcibly removing their uteruses, sexual assault, and harassment. Legal proceedings against the medical staff are continuing. In addition to these horrible conditions, the Stewart Detention Center used the COVID-19 pandemic to shut down visitation rights and further isolate those detained within. Grateful for *El Refugio*'s leadership, Bridges Faith Initiative joined with several other Georgian and national organizations to restore visitation rights. We were successful in restoring limited visitation rights. However, our fight has not ended. Although President Biden has declared the pandemic over, immigration detention centers all over the country are using COVID-19 as an excuse to continue denying visitation rights. We have joined a nationwide campaign to restore visitation rights at detention centers as well as end immigration detention as a whole.

In the courts, a 5th Circuit Judge ruled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) unlawful and sent the case back to the lower court. Currently, those who have DACA are allowed to keep their status and can renew it, but no new applications into the program will be allowed. **We demand Congress work towards creating a permanent solution. The lives of Dreamers should not be continually trapped in this legal limbo and uncertainty.**

Across the United States, politicians are using immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as political pawns to perpetuate their xenophobic and deadly agenda. Last week the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) decided on a new policy to expel Venezuelans seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico Border. This expansion of Title 42 expulsion policy is in essence an asylum ban on Venezuelans. Such a policy is despicable and goes against the spirit and letter of Immigration Law. The agreement between Mexico and the U.S. states 1000 Venezuelans would be returned to Mexico per day. **Bridges Faith Initiative is urging the Biden administration to adhere to**

its legal and moral obligation to ensure all asylum seekers have access to a humane and dignified asylum process without discrimination.

What We Are Working On

We are working with faith-based coalitions to introduce legislation that will permanently protect DACA recipients. We expect this legislation to be introduced after the election in November.

We are working with Venezuelan-American organizations and other immigration organizations to push the Biden Administration to reverse its asylum ban on Venezuelans and ensure this ban is not expanded to other nationalities.

We are working with faith leaders in Georgia to start a pressure group that can push our legislators to take action promoting just and humane immigration policies at the federal level. To join us please add your name here: [Immigration Faith Leader Interest](#)

We are taking action, and you can too. Your gift to Bridges Faith Initiative strengthens our work in creating a humane immigration system. We are thankful for any gift you can offer at this time.

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

Rabbi Joshua Lesser
and the BFI Team