



We're Called to Stand Up Against Anti-Immigrant Politics

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It is clear that far-right political actors see increased migration as an occasion to stoke racism and fear in order to mobilize voters with a nationalist agenda. However, both parties seem to place blame of the increased reality of forced migration on the backs of migrants themselves.

At the end of 2022, there were globally more than 108.4 million displaced people, more than 35 million of whom are refugees, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [report](#). This is more than any time in history. People are fleeing political upheaval, natural disasters, violence, hunger, and persecution because of their race, cultural group, or LGBTQIA status. As climate disasters increase, [millions of people are impacted by hurricanes and floods](#), yet current political systems do not envision granting refugee or asylum status to people displaced by climate change. On the contrary, the more people who are forced to flee, the more wealthy countries like the United States harden their walls, allowing thousands of migrants and refugees to [die in the desert](#), or the [Mediterranean sea](#), as if a deterrence strategy based on cruelty would stop people fleeing for their lives.

Governor Abbott of Texas is telling state troopers to [push migrant children](#) back to the Rio Grande river, where he wants barbed wire buoys to go, and then he buses migrants out of his state to Sanctuary cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC. Governor Ron DeSantis convinced the Florida legislature to pass one of the most anti-immigrant bills in history so that he could tout it on his presidential campaign. [Florida SB 1718](#) includes provisions to criminalize the transportation of undocumented people into the state, and forces hospitals to ask for citizenship status of all patients. The fear it has caused within immigrant communities is forcing some to choose to leave the state. These governors from Texas and Florida have used the issue of immigration to catapult themselves into national politics as

former President Trump.

Although harsh anti-immigrant politics filled with racist rhetoric are most prevalent within Republican strategies to use immigration to their advantage against Democrats, the Biden administration has chosen to see border issues as a liability, putting forth an asylum ban policy with striking resemblance to the policies of the Trump administration. Last week, a [federal court](#) once again enjoined the ban. Additionally, the Biden administration has chosen to utilize expedited removal and set a [dedicated docket](#) that is deporting asylum seekers so quickly that they never get to have their asylum cases heard in court.

People of faith have a moral responsibility to see through the politics and respond to the influx of migrants with compassion. Thousands of congregations are welcoming asylum seekers, but the grassroots capacity to house and provide services has its limits. Instead, we need to advocate for new policies that can truly address the issues we're facing. As Congress appropriates funds, they should recognize the housing affordability issues that have become a challenge for all, including new arrivals, and should pass robust funding to [address affordability](#). As many companies experience a labor shortage, we need to [expedite work permits](#) for asylum seekers and ensure that we're not [wasting the talent](#) of immigrant newcomers. Congress should [reject increased border militarization and create case management infrastructure](#). Faith communities have a role in welcoming immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, but we need our government systems to move forward real solutions now, rather than using these marginalized communities for political expediency.

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