

Fall 2020 U.S. Immigration Alert!

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ICE Is Leaving Immigrants To Die In Detention, Trump Used Looted Venezuelan Public Money To Build Border Wall With Mexico

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6/30: ICE is Leaving Immigrants to Die in Detention, and Retaliating When They Speak Out

Bianca Sierra Wolff, Lisa Knox - Counter Punch

The spread of COVID-19 to immigrant detention facilities poses a mortal danger to everyone who is unjustly detained. For months now advocates, organizers and those detained have urged elected officials and governmental agencies to take affirmative steps to prevent needless deaths and suffering inside immigrant detention facilities.

Despite the spread of COVID-19 in these facilities, and the threat it poses to those detained, facility staff, and surrounding communities, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has refused to exercise its legal discretion to release those detained and save lives. By some estimates ICE has chosen to release less than 2% of those held in its inhumane jails. In California the situation is compounded as the majority of those detained are held in facilities operated by for-profit corporations with an egregious record of negligence and misconduct.

In an attempt to shed light on these horrific circumstances, immigrants in detention in California have launched coordinated hunger strikes, calling attention to their plight, the death of their fellow detainees, and support for the Black Lives Matter movement. These acts of heroic resistance have been coordinated with and supported by community members, advocates and organizers.

In response, ICE and their for-profit henchmen have undertaken a vicious campaign against activists in detention, retaliating against them with acts of violence and seeking to delegitimize their words and actions in the press. This includes using

pepper spray against detainees who have peacefully protested or refused to sign a legal waiver in order to obtain masks, as well as threatening those who have taken part in hunger strikes.

In addition to threats of violence against detainees, ICE has sought to undermine resistance in detention facilities by making outlandish claims that detainees have been coerced into hunger strikes or that advocacy on the issue “exploits the plight of detainees”. In recent weeks ICE has blocked phone calls between local advocates and those in detention in order to sever communication and coordination with the outside world.

These actions are a blatant attempt to silence the free speech and expression of those detained, and a cruel attempt to sever the strong ties and solidarity that has developed between those in detention and their community of supporters. These cruel acts demonstrate just how desperate ICE is to stamp out the flames of organized resistance.

The simple truth is that ICE will do everything in its power to avoid admitting the most basic truth, that its detention system is unnecessary, unjust and inhumane. ICE’s unwillingness to release individuals is based solely on the fact that it does not want to acknowledge that it has the power to do so, and has always had this power, and does not need to detain immigrants in the manner and at the rate in which it does. ICE would rather facilitate mass deaths in its detention facilities than threaten the multibillion-dollar detention infrastructure it has built.

We condemn ICE’s retaliation against detainees who have organized in resistance and who continue to lead a brave struggle to protect their lives and assert their humanity. We demand that ICE cease all forms of retaliation against those detained, restore phone access at the Otay Mesa detention facility, and free all those who are unjustly and needlessly detained.

We call on elected officials to intervene to protect the civil and human rights of those in ICE custody, and demand a full and independent investigation into the cruel and inhumane actions that continue to take place in these facilities.

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7/3: Citing 'Unconscionable and Irresponsible Omission,' ACLU Demands Equal Covid-19 Protections for Immigrants

Julia Conley - Common Dreams

"Immigration status shouldn't be a death sentence, but if Congress doesn't act soon, it will continue to be."

The ACLU on Thursday launched a new digital ad campaign calling on the U.S. Senate to correct an "unconscionable" omission in the nation's coronavirus testing strategy, demanding that all immigrants be made eligible for Covid-19 testing and treatment in any upcoming legislation.

"It is your responsibility to make sure everyone has access to health care during a pandemic," the group wrote to both Democratic and Republican senators on Twitter. The ad campaign is targeting senators in Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Florida, and Arizona.

Tens of millions of immigrants are unable to access testing and treatment because every bill enacted by Congress so far has left out of testing access "DACA recipients; Temporary Protected Status holders; domestic violence survivors and survivors of crime; undocumented people; and green card holders," the ACLU wrote in a letter to Senate leaders last week.

"Many of our country's immigrants—both documented and undocumented—who are putting their lives on the line and risking their health with constant exposure, have been left out of access to COVID-19-related testing and treatment."
—Yesenia Chavez, ACLU

The HEROES Act, passed by the Democratic-led House in May, prioritized including immigrants—including nearly 20 million who are "essential" workers, ensuring that grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, and other businesses have kept running during the pandemic—in testing and treatment plans.

But Republicans who control the Senate have dismissed the package, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) calling it a "liberal wish list."

With the new ad campaign, the ACLU is calling on senators to push for access to testing and treatment for both documented and undocumented immigrants.

The ACLU noted when launching its campaign that 1.7 million immigrants are healthcare workers currently on the frontlines of the coronavirus pandemic, treating Covid-19 patients and putting themselves and their communities at risk for infection.

"The Senate must act swiftly to ensure access to testing and treatment for everyone: All of our lives are at stake." —Yesenia Chavez, ACLU

"Many of our country's immigrants—both documented and undocumented—who are putting their lives on the line and risking their health with constant exposure, have been left out of access to Covid-19-related testing and treatment," said Yesenia Chavez, policy analyst and campaign lead for the ACLU.

"This omission is unconscionable and irresponsible," Chavez added. "It also puts immigrant workers in an impossible position: many are without cash assistance, even if they pay their taxes, and are risking their lives for us, while simultaneously not having access to testing and treatment. It puts all of our health at great risk. The Senate must act swiftly to ensure access to testing and treatment for everyone: All of our lives are at stake."

In its letter to the Senate last week, the ACLU demanded that emergency Medicaid coverage be extended to everyone who needs it in order to access testing, and that anyone who files taxes, including those who file using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number instead of a Social Security number, be made eligible for cash assistance.

"As numbers spike all over America, our survival as a nation is at stake," said Manar Waheed, senior legislative and advocacy counsel for the ACLU, last week. "Yet Congress has repeatedly failed to ensure testing and treatment for everyone who needs it. As a result, the options for people left out are limited, create confusion over eligibility, and fail to provide the care that immigrants deserve. Immigration status shouldn't be a death sentence, but if Congress doesn't act soon, it will continue to be."

6/18: New Data Examines Political Anti-Chinese Rhetoric and Anti-AAPI Hate

Stop AAPI Hate

Stop AAPI Hate, the leading aggregator of incidents against Asian Americans during the pandemic, has compiled a new report examining the rise in hate incidents against Asian Americans and the anti-Chinese rhetoric by political leaders.

"We have seen time and again how dangerous it is when leaders scapegoat for political gain and use inflammatory rhetoric to stir up both interpersonal violence and racist policies. As we've seen throughout American history—from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to Japanese American wartime incarceration and most recently, immigration bans—Asians have been targeted with such vehement hate." — Dr. Russell Jeung, chair of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University.

Last week, Stop AAPI Hate reported that as of May 13, incidents of anti-Asian America discrimination documented across the U.S. approached 1,900 since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Of those incidents, approximately 502 incidents specifically mentioned the terms "China" or "Chinese" during the incidents of discrimination.

According to the report, it appears that there was a spike of incidents reported to the website after President Trump repeatedly employed the term, "Chinese Virus." There are a number of variables that could explain this correlation; nonetheless, Stop AAPI Hate contends that the president's and the Republican party's anti-Chinese rhetoric have entrenched racism and xenophobia in the public's perception of the coronavirus pandemic.

Recent news reports have drawn the conclusion that the president and other political leaders are stirring up anti-Chinese sentiment as a means to distract from both their handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide protests against deeply entrenched racism and violence against Black Americans in law enforcement.

"We condemn the racist, inciteful and violent rhetoric coming from the president and political leaders at the very top, who racialize tragedies to score political points and distract from their own mishandling of the pandemic. This rhetoric continues to devastate and harm communities of color in America." — Cynthia Choi, Co-Executive Director, Chinese for Affirmative Action

In turn, the president is currently pouring money into campaign ads against China. On April 17, the GOP sent a memo to campaigns stating that (1) China caused the virus by covering it up, (2) Democrats are "soft on China", and (3) Republicans will push for sanctions on China for its role in spreading the virus.

Other government leaders are picking up Trump's racist language—Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Rep. Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.) have used similar language. Senator Martha McSally, up for re-election, recently said, "China is to blame for this pandemic and the death of thousands of Americans."

Most significantly, last month the president introduced a ban limiting Chinese students in the United States, raising concerns

from a number of Asian American leaders.

In its report on the 502 incidents of discrimination and harassment with a clear link to anti-Chinese sentiment, Stop AAPI Hate noted that the following trends emerged:

1. Virulent animosity towards Chinese, with 37.5% of these cases laced with profanity and verbal taunts
2. Scapegoating of China for the spread of Covid-19, with 31.7% of the perpetrators blaming China or Chinese people as the source of the disease
3. Anti-immigrant nationalism of the assailants as they demand that Asian Americans “go back to China” or view China as the enemy (20.3%)
4. Parroting of the term, “Chinese virus” to imply the implicit association between Covid-19 and China (17.5%)
5. Orientalist and racist depictions of China and Chinese people as dirty, diseased, and holding strange dietary habits (12.6%)

“President Trump continues to utilize white supremacist and nationalist views as a means of scapegoating his failures for political gain. Unless we hold him accountable, the discrimination and harassment against Asian Americans will become deeply entrenched, cause unimaginable harm and suffering, and take decades to unwind.” – Manjusha P. Kulkarni, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council.

8/6: ICE deliberately limited testing at Bakersfield immigration facility with COVID-19 outbreak

Andrea Castillo - Los Angeles Times

Last month, as the coronavirus spread through federal immigration detention centers around the country, officials at the Mesa Verde facility in Bakersfield rejected a suggestion to test all detainees there because it would be difficult to quarantine those who tested positive, the officials said.

In an email on July 6, Janese Mull, the acting field office director for Immigration and Customs Enforcement in San Francisco, said lawyers for ICE had advised that it was in the facility’s best interest to look into conducting COVID-19 testing for all detainees.

But Brooke Sanchez Othon, a clinical operations specialist at Wellpath, a private Nashville-based healthcare company that provides services to ICE detention facilities, pushed back against Mull’s direction. The proposal to test all detainees, Sanchez Othon wrote, already had been denied “due to the housing restrictions we face.”

“Testing all detainees will potentially cause the same housing issue we had last week but on a larger scale,” Sanchez Othon continued, referring to the problem of quarantining infected detainees. “Completing the testing is not the issue it is just what we will need to do with the results once they are received.”

The email exchange, obtained by lawyers with the American Civil Liberties Union and the public defender’s office of San Francisco, reveals how ICE has failed to contain the spread of the coronavirus in its facilities, critics of the agency contend. This week, a COVID-19 outbreak emerged at the Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center, where about 120 detainees are being held. So far, 14 staff members and nine detainees have tested positive.

Detainees and immigrant rights advocates described a chaotic situation there, with two men hospitalized since Saturday and several more displaying symptoms of the virus while being held in large dormitories with others who feared becoming infected. As test results trickled in, the staff ran out of quarantine spaces, at one point reportedly placing two men in a bathroom for hours.

Spokespeople for ICE and GEO declined to comment because of pending litigation.

On Thursday, a federal judge in San Francisco issued a searing ruling, saying that ICE has “responded to the health crisis in such a cavalier fashion” that it has “lost the right to be trusted.”

“The documentary evidence shows that the defendants have avoided widespread testing of staff and detainees at the facility, not for lack of tests, but for fear that positive test results would require them to implement safety measures that they apparently felt were not worth the trouble,” Judge Vincent Chhabria wrote in granting the temporary restraining order.

Chhabria ordered officials to administer weekly rapid COVID-19 tests to all detainees at the facility and not take in new detainees.

Emails and other documents obtained by the lawyers, who sued the federal government in April over conditions at the facility amid the pandemic, provide a rare behind-the-scenes look at conditions in the facility and ICE's response to the novel coronavirus.

Mesa Verde has four dorms, each outfitted with enough bunk beds for 100 people. The facility has three disciplinary segregation rooms, two medical segregation rooms and three intake rooms, which don't have beds. Before the outbreak last week, detainees alternated top and bottom bunk sleeping assignments, with one person per bed.

Detainees in dorm B demanded to be tested for days before facility staff supplied tests late last month, advocates and detainees said. In an email sent Wednesday, an attorney for the federal government said that 78 detainees in the remaining three dormitories at Mesa Verde were tested and seven others refused testing. Detainees from dorm B were moved into dorm C so that dorm B could be designated for those who test positive.

In a May 18 memo, Nathan Allen, the warden at Mesa Verde, laid out a COVID-19 testing plan. Testing would begin two days later, and detainees who refused to be tested would be held together in a dorm for 14 days. Those who tested positive would be moved to medical isolation areas or a general population living area, depending on the number of people.

"Any detainee who tests positive will be quarantined appropriately according to CDC guidelines," he wrote.

But that plan was not executed, documents show.

Three days later, the San Francisco assistant field office director, Alexander Pham, wrote in notes from a conference call that, because of constraints that the ICE Health Service Corps guidelines would put on housing resources, "we will be limiting the scope of testing as much as possible."

Further correspondence makes clear ICE and GEO Group's indifference to testing, and their inability to agree on a consistent strategy, advocates said.

Another heated exchange began May 21 when Wendy Baca, the acting health service administrator for Mesa Verde, addressed by email concerns that she had with the warden's plan for testing "street arrests" — those brought to the facility after being arrested by ICE rather than being transferred in.

Baca said that testing those detainees immediately and then releasing them to the facility's general population right after they test negative "will not ensure COVID-19 does not make it into the facility. This is due to the incubation period (generally 14 days) needed to trigger a positive COVID-19 test result."

Erik Bonnar, the deputy field office director for ICE in San Francisco, replied by email bluntly: "It appears GEO has no interest in conducting asymptomatic testing AND the test kits GEO secured are not the IHSC [ICE Health Service Corps] recommended type. You can't make this ... up."

On May 26, the warden, Allen, wrote that the acting field office director "would rather not have staff testing" because it would affect Enforcement and Removal Operations, the arm of ICE that handles deportations.

A month later, an executive with the GEO Group, the private prison company that manages the facility, scolded Allen, saying that his testing plan fell short of identifying mitigating strategies for incoming detainees who don't consent to being tested but are placed directly into a housing unit anyway.

"We cannot just throw up our hands and say there isn't anything we can do," said Paul Laird, GEO's western region vice president. "We should at minimum identify specific areas within the unit for new arrivals. Maybe it is in a row of bunks in the front, maybe in the back etc, but we can't just scatter them throughout the unit without any controls.

"Whether it be tape on the floor, privacy curtains, or any other strategy you can identify, it would be better than just saying we are unable to do anything."

On April 29, Chhabria ordered ICE to produce a list of detainees at serious risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 for consideration for release. Nearly 130 detainees have been ordered released by Chhabria since then. Others have been released voluntarily by ICE or on bond.

But at the same time, ICE continued bringing new detainees into the facility — about 175 since early May, lawyers said.

Detainees have been left to wonder how the outbreak began, speculating that it could have been either through staff or recent arrivals.

The first Mesa Verde staffer to test positive, on June 17, was a nurse. The first detainee tested positive at intake and remained quarantined before entering the general population on July 1.

But the virus didn't spread until four weeks later, on July 30, when 65-year-old Yao Saeturn tested positive. He was taken to a local hospital the next day and released to his family on Monday.

Some detainees arrived from prisons with coronavirus outbreaks. One detainee who was transferred from the California Correctional Institution in Tehachapi, where more than 150 inmates have COVID-19, said that he was tested only after he requested a test. Another detainee who was transferred July 28 from Avenal State Prison, where the virus has killed two inmates, said his temperature was taken when he arrived but he wasn't tested.

When German Najera Grajeda was transferred to Mesa Verde April 9 from the Growlersberg Conservation Camp northeast of Sacramento, he did not receive a coronavirus test.

Najera developed nausea and body aches early last week. The 33-year-old, who suffers from asthma, said he immediately requested a coronavirus test but was told that it wasn't necessary.

He received one days later. By Monday, he was taken to medical, where a nurse told him he had COVID-19.

Najera said she told him not to tell anyone "so they wouldn't be alarmed" and sent him back to the dorm. An hour later, they moved him to a disciplinary segregation room.

That night, he fainted and woke up in the hospital, where he was placed on oxygen and had a seizure before being discharged and taken back to Mesa Verde.

"They haven't treated me like a human being," Najera said. "They're viewing this illness as if it's not serious. They don't fear it."

He said things started to improve Wednesday, under pressure from lawyers. Finally, nurses began checking his temperature three times a day instead of one.

Susan Beaty, a fellow at Centro Legal de la Raza in Oakland, was one of 14 people arrested July 27 at the home of California Gov. Gavin Newsom while demanding that he halt transfers from prisons to detention facilities.

"We were there because clients and community members had been telling us for six months that the transfers are going to fuel the outbreak," Beaty said. "A week later, here we are."

6/29: Trump used looted Venezuelan public money to build border wall with Mexico

An estimated \$24 billion of Venezuelan public money has been looted, and the Trump administration has used at least \$601 million of it to construct a militarized wall on the US-Mexico border.

Ben Norton - The Grey Zone

Since the United States initiated a coup attempt against Venezuela's elected leftist government in January 2019, up to \$24 billion worth of Venezuelan public assets have been seized by foreign countries, primarily by Washington and member states of the European Union.

President Donald Trump's administration has used at least \$601 million of that looted Venezuelan money to fund construction of its border wall with Mexico, according to government documents first reviewed by Univision.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump insisted countless times that he would "make Mexico pay" to build a gargantuan wall covering all of the roughly 2,000 miles (3,145 kilometers) of its northern border.

Unable to force the country to fund his \$18 billion pet project, which has already cost an estimated \$30 million per mile in southern Texas, Trump has turned to other questionable sources of financing.

Univision reviewed US congressional records and court documents and found that the Trump administration tapped into \$601 million of the Treasury Department's "forfeiture fund" to supplement the wall construction.

The United States has seized at least \$1 billion of Venezuelan public funds that Washington in turn claimed were supposedly being stolen by government officials, according to Univision. This is in addition to the billions more worth of Venezuelan state assets that have been illegally taken over by the Trump administration, the most important of which is Caracas' crown jewel, the oil refinery Citgo.

"None of that money... has been returned to the Venezuelan people," Univision reported. "Instead, most of the money is being collected by the U.S. Justice and Treasury Departments and held in special forfeiture funds used mostly to fund law enforcement investigations."

Right-wing opposition upset Trump didn't give Guaidó gang all stolen Venezuelan money

The Trump corruption scandal has been almost entirely ignored by mainstream corporate media outlets. Univision buried its own scoop deep in a report that advanced the talking points of Venezuela's US-backed right-wing opposition and referred to the elected government of President Nicolás Maduro as a "widely repudiated regime."

Univision, the largest corporate media network in the United States that focuses on Latino issues, is owned by billionaire-controlled private equity firms, one of the most prominent of whom is the Israeli-American oligarch Haim Saban.

Based in Miami, the de facto capital of the Latin American right, this massive media conglomerate acts as a mouthpiece for conservative forces and corporate interests across Central and South America.

The Univision article, titled "Legal battle over Venezuela's looted billions heats up," refers to unelected US-appointed coup leader Juan Guaidó as the leader of the country's supposed "interim government."

Univision also absolved the US and European countries of stealing billions of dollars of Venezuelan public money, justifying the theft with allegations of Venezuelan government corruption.

However, the fact that the report saw the light of day reflects a growing schism between supporters of the Venezuelan opposition and their imperial patrons in Washington. Univision was clearly upset that the Trump administration had not given the self-declared "Guaidó government" the money that it stole from Caracas.

"When it comes to who gets to keep the money from those looted assets, the U.S. appears unwilling to relinquish the cash," Univision wrote in frustration.

The Guaidó gang's blatant corruption

What Univision did not mention in the report was that the Juan Guaidó coup administration had already been exposed for numerous acts of corruption.

Top Guaidó operatives spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of supposed "humanitarian aid" money on fancy hotels, nightclubs, dinners, and clothes during a US-led coup attempt on the Colombia-Venezuela border in February 2019.

The Grayzone's Anya Parampil also exposed how Guaidó allies oversaw a scam to liquidate Citgo, Venezuela's most valuable foreign asset, essentially selling it off to North American corporations.

As for the billions of dollars of Venezuelan public assets stolen by Western governments, there is no sign of that money ever being returned to the Venezuelan people.

In his new book "The Room Where It Happened," former Trump administration national security advisor John Bolton boasted that the British government "was delighted to cooperate on steps they could take" to assist in Washington's coup efforts, "for example freezing Venezuelan gold deposits in the Bank of England, so the regime could not sell the gold to keep itself going."

The Bank of England still holds approximately \$1 billion of gold that it stole from the Venezuelan government, and has refused to give it back.

7/10: What Is the U.S.-Mexico Border to Indigenous Peoples Who Have Lived There?

Christina Leza -- Yes!

For Indigenous peoples of the Americas, the U.S.-Mexico border is increasingly a symbol and tool of genocide. When this border was created, Indigenous peoples of the region were divided, including the Yaqui, O'odham, Cocopah, Kumeyaay, Pai, Apache, and Kickapoo. These peoples are represented by 26 sovereign tribal nations in the United States with tribal relatives residing in Mexico. Indigenous peoples tend to understand and talk about the U.S.-Mexico border in different terms from those who understand the border to be an agreement between governments, often describing the border as artificial or "imaginary."

Several international legal instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), confirm the right of Indigenous peoples to maintain connections to their homelands and peoples across international borders. Some Indigenous groups such as the Lipan Apache have pursued actions to address rights violations through the U.N. reporting system. International human rights law, however, is not now recognized as binding for decision-making in U.S. courts.

Throughout my decade-long field research on grassroots Indigenous border activism in the southern Arizona region, the usefulness of international Indigenous rights for ensuring rights at the local level was one area of debate among activists.

Given the sovereign status of U.S. tribal nations, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has established some general policies and practices to facilitate border crossing for Indigenous peoples of the U.S.-Mexico border region. The only fully formalized policy for southern border crossing, however, is a mandate that tribes develop and make use of Enhanced Tribal Cards, tribal identification cards that include security technology to confirm the tribal enrollment and citizenship status of U.S. tribal members.

The absence of clear policies and procedures for such things as the handling of Indigenous sacred items and the processing of Indigenous members who are Mexican citizens has resulted in delays or denials of entry for Indigenous members into the United States for ceremonial and cultural events, detainments, and the mishandling or destruction of sacred items.

A number of grassroots Indigenous organizations such as the Indigenous Alliance Without Borders, O'odham Voice Against the Wall, and Indivisible Tohono are working in the U.S.-Mexico border region to raise consciousness about the negative impacts of current border enforcement policies on Indigenous peoples, and to work for new policies that recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples within their homelands. Since 1997, the Indigenous Alliance Without Borders has provided support to and advocated for the border rights of Indigenous groups throughout the border region.

The Indigenous Alliance has long advocated for the development of comprehensive legislation that would address Indigenous border rights at both the Canada-U.S. and U.S.-Mexico borders, and has envisioned summits that include both tribal government and grassroots community leaders. Recent tribal border summits in Tucson, Arizona, organized by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the Tohono O'odham Nation, and the National Congress of American Indians are building toward this vision. The Indigenous Alliance has also advocated for the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by U.S. tribal governments on the U.S.-Mexico border to help build a common reference for Indigenous border rights.

While Indigenous leaders work to address issues they face with U.S.-Mexico border policy, Indigenous members must continue to grapple with the everyday impacts of increasing border enforcement, including the growing presence of Border Patrol and surveillance technology on reservation lands, as well as the disruption of their lands by border barrier construction.

"The effect of a wall is already in us. It already divides us... It's a psychological wall," says O'odham activist Mike Wilson, who is also concerned about increased border barrier construction. That psychological wall has devastating impacts "that many will not realize until generations to come," he adds.

Given the U.S. government's historical treatment of Indigenous peoples in the attempt to eradicate their rights and presence on U.S.-claimed lands, both continued Indigenous movement and widespread public support are needed to help rectify the physical, social, and psychological harms caused by the "imaginary line."

Prop 16: Fighting gender discrimination and systemic racism is on the ballot

Prop 16 will restore critical equal opportunity policies in state hiring, contracting, and education

<https://voteyesonprop16.org>

What is Prop 16?

Current law prevents our elected leaders from taking targeted action to fight discrimination based on race and gender.

Voting “Yes” on Proposition 16 would reverse the ban on equal opportunity policies like affirmative action so that elected leaders can design programs that provide good jobs, better wages, and access to great schools for all Californians.

California is one of the most diverse states in the country. **It’s time our laws reflect the strength of our diversity.**

What Prop 16 means for you

California is one of just eight states that bans equal opportunity programs like affirmative action. Proposition 16 reinstates affirmative action in public education, public contracting, and public hiring so that everyone—Black, Latino, Asian American, White, man or woman—has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Proposition 16 is our best tool to root out discrimination in all its forms this November — which will put us on the path to a stronger California after COVID-19. A California where everyone — no matter what they look like, where they come from, or who they are — has equal opportunity to succeed.

Proposition 16 is how we build a California that reflects our values of diversity and fairness — and how we show the nation what eradicating discrimination in all its forms really looks like.

FACT: Affirmative action promotes equal opportunity for women and people of color.

Women and people of color are paid less, given fewer chances to access higher education, and are denied the same job opportunities as white men. Affirmative action works to level the playing field by allowing the state to consider race and gender—without quotas—when making decisions about state contracts, hiring and education.

FACT: Studies show that income is a faulty basis for policy aimed at ensuring equity.

Even when income levels are equal, Black and Latino families face unique challenges that limit their access to high- quality school and good-paying jobs. While a black family and a white family may have the same household income, for example, each has wildly different experiences and circumstances that can affect educational and professional opportunities much more than income.

To meaningfully address the lack of equal opportunity here in California, we need race-conscious policies that take into account the full breadth of people’s experiences, which are shaped by the systemic racism and sexism that prevents equal opportunity. That starts with repealing 209.

FACT: Passing Prop 16 will empower California’s Asian American students, business owners, women, and families.

Studies show Asian American students and businesses are better off in states that have equal opportunity policies like affirmative action. Contrary to popular belief, Asian American and Pacific Islander admissions to the University of California have declined since 1996. Meanwhile, Universities that practice affirmative action outside of California have seen greater gains in Asian American enrollment.

Repealing Proposition 209 would also unlock billions of dollars in economic opportunities for Asian American small business owners. Research shows that Asian American businesses earn more public contracting dollars in cities where affirmative action is legal, such as Chicago and Atlanta, compared to those cities in which equal opportunity policies are banned, like San Francisco.

FACT: Repealing 209 is California’s a strong and effective response to the racist policies and rhetoric of the Trump White House.

What matters to Californians is standing up to racism, sexism, and those who use race and gender to divide us. Fixing Prop 209 is our way of saying we don’t have to put up with the hateful rhetoric from the White House, with people of color being shot in our community, with denying women their rights or with locking up Latino children in cages. We can do something about it. One step is to repeal Prop 209 so we can stand up to Trump, make things better in our state, and fight for a better world.

FACT: Standardized test scores are unfair and weak measures of merit and college potential

California shouldn't decide who gets equal opportunity based on test scores. Performance on test scores correlates with family income and parental education. If California stands for fairness and opportunity, we can't let those two criteria decide the future of our communities. Research shows that standardized tests, at best, predict about 15% of student success in the first year of college, and have almost NO relationship to student outcomes after the first-year. They are not good measures of college potential.

FACT: Colleges and universities CANNOT and WILL NOT use racial quotas to fill their classes and achieve diversity

The Supreme Court ruled that racial quotas are unconstitutional. Quotas have been outlawed in university admissions since 1978 (UC Regents v. Bakke). Repealing Prop. 209 will not lead to quotas, which are unconstitutional.

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send-e-mail to: api-la-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/api-la>

**New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania areas
immigrant workers information and alerts**

send e-mail to: nyc-immigrantalert-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/nyc-immigrantalert>

US-Mexico Border Information and Action Alert!

send e-mail to: Border01-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
or visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Border01/>

Virginia state-wide immigrant organizing E-mail list

send- e-mail to: va-immigrantrights-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/va-immigrantrights>

May Day 2017 national organizing e-mail list

send e-mail to: mayday2017-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/MayDay2017>

About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

NISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website:
<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

Contact Information:

E-mail: info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org
(626)394-0710 (Los Angeles)

Please donate to NISN! (All donations are tax deductible!)
Check pay to: **NISN/AFGJ**
Send to: **National Immigrant Solidarity Network**
P.O. Box 751
South Pasadena, CA 91031-0751

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