

November 29, 2023

Re: Vote “NO” on H.R. 5283, Protecting Our Communities from Failure to Secure the Border Act of 2023

The ACLU strongly urges you to vote NO on H.R. 5283, “Protecting our Communities from Failure to Secure the Border Act of 2023.” **The ACLU will score the vote.**

This bill would prohibit federal funds from being used to house vulnerable people seeking safety in our nation on any lands under the jurisdiction of the Federal land management agencies. It is a blatant attack on the work of states, cities and the federal government to effectively receive and assist vulnerable people who have arrived in the United States, many after making harrowing journeys.

By tying the hands of the federal government, the bill would severely undermine American communities that are receiving and welcoming these individuals. Instead of harming these communities, Congress should heed their call for resources—including funding for FEMA’s Shelter and Services Program and expediting work permits so that asylum seekers and other migrants gain the ability to work and support their families.

We also urge you to oppose the bill because it is a heartless attack on individuals who arrive in the United States—many after making a harrowing journey in search of humanitarian protection. These people—including families with young children—need temporary shelter, medical assistance, legal advice and other critical services the federal government can provide. Seeking to bar the government from providing temporary shelter to these individuals is a moral affront, at a time of the year when our nation’s tradition is to celebrate humanity and charity, particularly to the most vulnerable.

This bill provides no solutions. Nothing in this bill will address the reasons for which people come to the United States seeking protection, nor does it provide support for communities receiving migrants or otherwise provide resources for efficient screening of arriving migrants at ports of entry. If enacted, this legislation will only make it harder for American communities to receive and provide services to individuals with limited assistance from the federal government.

The Department of Interior [opposes](#) the bill because it would “restrict the ability of the Department and its bureaus...to make decisions regarding the appropriate uses, even in emergency or other circumstances.” The Department of Agriculture likewise [opposes](#) the bill, emphasizing “[w]e do not believe it is necessary and therefore do not support this legislation.”



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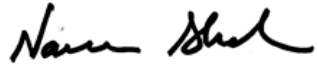
Deirdre Schifeling
Chief Political and Advocacy
Officer

Anthony D. Romero
Executive Director

Deborah N. Archer
President

Thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to contact ACLU senior border policy counsel Sarah Mehta, smehta1@aclu.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Naureen Shah
Deputy Director of Government
Affairs, Equality Div.



Sarah Mehta
Senior Policy Counsel on
Border



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