

February 1, 2015

Dear Representative:

As border, immigration, faith, labor, environmental, privacy, civil rights, and human rights advocates, we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 399, the “Secure Our Borders First Act.” Instead of contributing to immigration reform, this bill would devastatingly militarize border communities, harm trade and tourism, despoil the environment where tens of millions of northern and southern border residents live, and imperil their privacy through constant, intrusive drone surveillance.

Just seven months ago, Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul argued that border security “demands a plan, verified by outside experts, before one dollar is spent on new resources.” A bipartisan border-security bill doing just that passed out of his Homeland Security Committee unanimously. Now, H.R. 399 tests credulity by requiring a 100% perfect apprehension rate for unauthorized migrants at exorbitant cost and *without a plan in place*.

While our organizations all bring their own unique priorities and concerns, and don’t all rely on every argument in this letter, we come together in united opposition to H.R. 399. The bill proposes unfunded spending of \$10 billion, which appears to be only a down payment on future extravagance, as the Congressional Budget Office warns that “CBO expects that [the Department of Homeland Security] will be unable to meet [the bill’s] deadlines for nearly all construction projects.” These additional billions are to be spent without including any oversight or accountability measures for the nation’s largest law enforcement agency – one of its most troubled – Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Border communities are already straining under the weight of massive and unaccountable enforcement spending over the last decade. H.R. 399 throws money at a bloated agency, along with equipment designed for and taken from theaters of war, rather than developing commonsense border policies that establish transparency, accountability, and oversight while improving the flow of goods and people through ports-of-entry. The agency’s own former head of internal affairs has called at least eight of the 30 CBP-caused deaths since 2010 “highly suspect,” adding that “thousands of employees hired during an unprecedented expansion of the agency in the post-9/11 era are potentially unfit to carry a badge and gun.”

H.R. 399’s waiver of environmental laws within 100 miles of U.S. land borders betrays the intergenerational compact of land stewardship for our borderlands. The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees previously called these waivers, “the most direct assault on national parks ever to be advanced at any level in any Congress in U.S. history.” Moreover, the bill proposes a massive expansion of drone surveillance of all border residents, U.S. citizens and lawful immigrants included, despite the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General concluding *this year* that “we see no evidence that the drones contribute to a more secure border, and there is no reason to invest additional taxpayer funds at this time.”

At a time when immigration reform is urgently needed to offer aspiring Americans a broad and welcoming pathway to citizenship, H.R. 399 is a highly irresponsible measure. It would have severely damaging fiscal, environmental, and privacy costs, and trample on the

rights of tens of millions of residents who call border communities home. Congress must act instead to reform CBP's operations by making enforcement more accountably respectful of human and civil rights and our environment.

H.R. 399 is exactly the wrong way to address sensible border policy. We urge you to oppose it on the House floor.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alianza Comunitaria (Escondido, CA)  
Alliance for Global Justice (National)  
Alliance San Diego (San Diego, CA)  
Allies for Knoxville's Immigrant Neighbors (Knoxville, TN)  
America's Voice Education Fund (National)  
American Civil Liberties Union (National)  
American Friends Service Committee (National)  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) (National)  
Amnesty International USA (National)  
Annunciation House, Inc. (El Paso, TX)  
Arkansas United Community Coalition (AUCC) (Arkansas)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (National)  
Asian Law Alliance (San Jose, CA)  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) (National)  
Asociación de Liderazgo Comunitario (National)  
Association of Raza Educators (San Diego, CA)  
Binational Friendship Garden of Native Plants (San Diego, CA)  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (National)  
Border Action Network (Tucson, AZ)  
Border and Immigration Ministry (Tucson, AZ)  
Border Encuentro (San Diego, CA)  
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace (Cambridge, MA)  
Casa San Jose (Pittsburgh, PA)  
Center for Community Change (National)  
Center for Employment Training (San Jose, CA)  
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law (National)  
Central American Resource Center-Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)  
Chiapas Support Committee (Oakland, CA)  
Church of Reconciliation (National)  
Church Women United in New York State (New York)  
Church World Service (New York)  
Civil Rights For Immigrants, Action of Greater Lansing (Lansing, MI)  
CNY Immigration Reform Task Force (Syracuse, NY)  
Coalición de Derechos Humanos (Tucson, AZ)  
Coalition of Latino Leaders (National)  
Colibrí Center for Human Rights (National)  
Commission on Justice, Glenmary Home Missioners (Rural South & Appalachia)  
Community to Community Development - C2C (Bellingham, WA)  
Comunidades en Acción y de Fe (New Mexico)  
Constitutional Alliance (National)  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) (National)  
Culver-Palms United Methodist Church (Culver City, CA)  
Democratic Socialists of America (National)  
Denver Justice & Peace Committee (Denver, CO)

Detention Watch Network (National)  
Dominican Sisters (California)  
El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos (Albuquerque, NM)  
El Centro Hispano De Oceana (Harti, MI)  
Employee Rights Center (San Diego, CA)  
Encuentro (New Mexico)  
Enlace (National)  
Enlace Comunitario (Albuquerque, NM)  
Equality New Mexico (New Mexico)  
Farmworker Association of Florida (Florida)  
Farmworker Justice (National)  
Filipino Advocates for Justice (National)  
Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC) (Florida)  
Friends of Friendship Park (San Diego, CA)  
Frontera Audubon Society (Weslaco, TX)  
Frontera de Cristo (Douglas,AZ/Agua Prieta,Sonora)  
Fruitvale Housing Collective (Oakland, CA)  
Gamaliel (National)  
Georgia Detention Watch (National)  
Grassroots Leadership (National)  
Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice (Rochester, NY)  
Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans (National)  
Highlander Research and Education Center (New Market, TN)  
Holy Trinity Catholic Church (National)  
Human Agenda (San Jose, CA)  
Humane Borders (National)  
ICNA Council for Social Justice (Vienna, VA)  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (Illinois)  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (Minnesota)  
Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (National)  
Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (Oregon)  
Jesuit Social Research Institute/Loyola University New Orleans (New Orleans, LA)  
Justice Overcoming Boundaries (San Diego, CA)  
Kids In Need of Defense (KIND) (National)  
Kids on the Border (Eugene, OR)  
La Clínica de La Raza (Oakland, CA)  
La Unión del Pueblo Entero (San Juan, TX)  
Latin America Solidarity Committee (Milwaukee, WI)  
Latin America Working Group (National)  
Latinos United for a New America (Santa Clara County, CA)  
League of United Latin American Citizens (National)  
MAIZ (Fallbrook, CA)  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (Massachusetts)  
Michigan United (Michigan)  
Midwest Coalition Against Lethal Mining (Madison, WI)  
Migrant Justice (National)  
Monsoon United Asian Women of Iowa (Des Moines, IA)  
Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano (California)  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators (National)  
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) (National)  
National Council of Jewish Women (National)  
National Council of La Raza (National)  
National Employment Law Project (National)  
National Immigrant Justice Center (National)

National Immigration Law Center (National)  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (National)  
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (National)  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (National)  
National Lawyers Guild (National)  
National Network for Arab American Communities (National)  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (National)  
National Organization of Asian Pacific Islanders Ending Sexual Violence (National)  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (National)  
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest (Nebraska)  
New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) (Jackson Heights, NY)  
New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice (New Mexico)  
New Mexico Voices for Children (New Mexico)  
New York Immigration Coalition (National)  
No More Deaths • No Más Muertes (Tucson, AZ)  
Northern Borders Coalition (National)  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (Washington)  
OneAmerica (Washington)  
Pangea Legal Services (San Francisco, CA)  
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (San Diego, CA)  
Pax Christi Peace Seekers (Michigan)  
Project South (Atlanta, GA)  
Prosperity Works (New Mexico)  
Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians) (National)  
Proyecto Azteca (Texas)  
Proyecto Hondureño (Boston, MA)  
Proyecto Juan Diego (Brownsville, TX)  
Public Architecture and Planning (San Diego, CA)  
RAISE (Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East Coast) (New York, NY)  
Rights for All People (Aurora, CO)  
Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network (Brownsville, TX)  
RVUUF Social Justice & Action Committee (Ashland, OR)  
SAALT (National)  
San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council (San Diego, CA)  
SE Mass & RI Coalition to Save Our Schools (Rhode Island/Massachusetts)  
SEIU Local 221 (San Diego, CA)  
SEIU United Service Workers West (California)  
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN) (San Jose, CA)  
Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters (National)  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (National)  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester (Rochester, NY)  
Sisters of the Assumption (Chaparral, NM)  
SOA Watch (National)  
Society of the Divine Word Chicago Province- Justice and Peace Committee (Chicago, IL)  
Sojourners (National)  
Somos un Pueblo Unido (Santa Fe, NM)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) (National)  
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (National)  
Southern Border Communities Coalition (National)  
Southwest Environmental Center (Las Cruces, NM)  
St. Anthony's Social Justice Committee (Hightstown, NJ)  
Street Level Health Project (Oakland, CA)  
Sunshine Farm (New Hampshire)  
Task Force on the Americas (California)

Texas Border Coalition (Texas)  
The Church Council of Greater Seattle (Seattle, WA)  
The Government Accountability Project (National)  
United for Justice with Peace (Boston, MA)  
United We Dream (National)  
Unión del Barrio (California)  
Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education (Vista, CA)  
Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (Michigan)  
Women's Refugee Commission (National)  
Worker Justice Center of New York (New York)  
Ypsilanti 1st Congregational United Church of Christ (Ypsilanti, Michigan)  
Zapatista Solidarity Coalition (Sacramento, CA)