March 23, 2017

Re: Oppose the border wall – Support H.R. 837, H.R. 739, and PROFILED Act

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of civil rights, faith, environmental, and indigenous organizations and communities, we write to express our opposition to any efforts to expand the extensive, nearly 650 mile-long border wall that already exists between the United States and Mexico as specified in the Border Security and Immigration Improvement Executive Order (1/25/17).

Instead, we urge you to support legislation such as H.R. 837, the Build Bridges Not Walls Act and H.R. 739, the This Land Is Our Land Act in the House – as well as the PROFILED Act in the Senate - that prohibit the use of taxpayer dollars to build the wall, ensuring that Congress remains a guardian of civil rights, a good steward of taxpayer dollars and the responsible custodian of the integrity of our wildlife and public lands.

The false narrative of a violent and insecure border region has long been used to justify and advance anti-immigrant, anti-border, pro-criminalization, and anti-environment legislation that has negative economic and civil rights impacts on border communities. However, the fact is that border cities are some of the safest in the country and that communities with more immigrants are likely to be safer than places with fewer immigrants.

The wall, increased militarization of the border region, the criminalization of immigrants, and the destruction of wildlife habitat are all tools of politicians who seek to advance an extreme and profit driven agenda at the expense of our communities. Moreover, these measures have nothing to do with the security of the border region or our nation.

The latest move to advance this administration’s anti-immigrant agenda is President Trump’s Executive Order (EO) directing the construction of a wall on our southern border. This EO is not just bad policy that will do nothing to make us safer and squander billions of dollars, but it is also a divisive decision opposed by civil rights, border, religious, environmental, and indigenous communities, and private-property and business owners who live and work along the U.S.-Mexico border. Latinos in particular see the wall as anti-immigrant, anti-Latino, and anti-Mexican.

Additional construction of the border wall is expected to cost $21.6 billion according to the latest estimates from the Department of Homeland Security. In spite of the administration’s unfounded assurances that another sovereign country will be made to foot the bill, the President has no ability to make that happen and should not make such false promises to the American taxpayers.

Further construction of a border wall will harm the environment that border communities cherish and depend on. It will further hurt wildlife; destroy sensitive habitat for endangered species; damage the natural flow of floodwaters; lead to costly litigation with landowners, Native American communities, and other stakeholders; and threaten the economic, social, and cultural ties between the United States and Mexico. Your leadership is needed to put an end to the unnecessary expansion of a southern border wall which, at its core, is simply another manifestation of this Administration’s anti-immigrant sentiment dressed up as public policy.

Your support for legislation such as H.R. 837, the Build Bridges Not Walls Act and H.R. 739, the This Land Is Our Land Act in the House – as well as the PROFILED Act in the Senate - is critical. The Build Bridges Not Walls Act would protect taxpayers by prohibiting the implementation of President Trump’s Executive Order to build a wall on our U.S.-Mexico border using taxpayer dollars. The This Land Is Our Land Act would bar the construction of any wall or fence on Federal lands controlled by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture or
Interior. Similarly, the PROFILED Act includes language rescinding the construction of the border wall and other provisions.

We strongly urge you to support these three pieces of legislation and are counting on you to help fight any legislative attempts to authorize or fund additional, and unnecessary construction of a wall at our southern border. For more information, please contact Luis Torres, Director of Policy and Legislation, at latorres@lulac.org.

Sincerely,

League of United Latin American Citizens
Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)
Alliance for African Assistance
Alliance for Citizenship
Alliance San Diego
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Americans for Immigrant Justice
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Arkansas United Community Coalition
Arlington Street Church (Boston) – Social Action Committee
Arte Inc
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Association of Latinos/Latinas Motivating Action (ALMA)
Azul
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bioarch, L.L.C.
Calpulli Mexican Dance Company
CASA
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Black Equity, Inc.
Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
Chispa, League of Conservation Voters
Church World Service
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services
Colectivo Accion Latina de Ambiente
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
Comite Civico Del Valle
Communities for a Better Environment
Community Science Institute - CSI
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Defenders of Wildlife
Detroiter Working for Environmental Justice
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Earthjustice
EJWC
El Taller Latino Americano
Endangered Species Coalition
Entre Hermanos
Equality California
Equality New Mexico
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center Farmworker Justice
FLAS, Inc.
Food Empowerment Project
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Peace Center
Friends of Broward Detainees
Friends of Friendship Park GLAAD
GreenLatinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic Health Council
Hispanic Health Network
Hispanos Unidos De Buffalo Inc.
HONOR PAC
Human Rights Campaign
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Interfaith Worker Justice International
Indian Treaty Council
International League of Conservation Photographers
Islamic Center of San Diego
Jesus People Against Pollution
Junta for Progressive Action, Inc.
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Sisters of Saint Francis
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office, Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
Kino Border Initiative
Klamath Forest Alliance
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Latino Commission on AIDS
Latino Decisions
Latino U College Access
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Latinos for Secure Retirement
Latinos in the Deep South
La Union del Pueblo Entero
Leadership Conference on Women Religious
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Long Island Wins
Los Jardines Institute
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Mazzoni Center
Mi Familia Vota
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Education Association
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Park Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Mexico Environmental Law Center
New York Immigrant Coalition
Noble Renewables Group of the West
NoMMAA (Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance)
North County Immigrant Task Force
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
OneAmerica
One Colorado
Pangea Legal Services
Pax Christi USA
Pride at Work
Pride for Youth
Puerto Rico Para Tod@s
Reformed Church of Highland Park
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC)
Rosedale Recycles
SAVE
School of the Americas Watch
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Services Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Sky Island Alliance
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Border Communities Coalition
Southern California Immigrant Project
Southwest Environmental Center
Spanish Speaking Elderly Council – RAICES
Texas Organizing Project
The Dream Corps
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
The Green Valley/Sahuarita Samaritans
The New York Immigration Coalition
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
third horizon consulting
Tri-ValleyCAREs
T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Turtle Island Restoration Network
UnLocal, Inc.
United Latinx Fund
United Methodist Women
U.S.-Mexico Foundation
Valley AIDS Council
Verde
Violence Intervention Program
Voces de la Frontera
Voces Verdes Voto
Latino
We Stay/Nos Quedamos
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlands Network
WOEIP