



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

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November 30, 2023

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Coalition on Human Needs, I urge you vote NO on H.R. 5283, a bill banning shelter for migrants on public lands, which is scheduled to be before you this afternoon.

The Coalition on Human Needs is an [alliance of organizations](#) including faith groups, human service providers, policy experts, labor, civil rights, and others concerned with meeting the needs of people with low incomes. We believe true immigration reform should be a top priority for Congress. That means maintaining and strengthening the U.S. commitment to welcoming refugees who are fleeing persecution and imminent danger. Congress should provide smart resources at the border that meet the needs of local communities, along with important resources for welcoming asylum-seekers across the country. We support the resources to modernize ports of entry, expand legal pathways for migrants, and address the root causes of migration. H.R. 5283 is a step in the wrong direction by prohibiting the use of Federal funds to provide housing to asylum seekers on any land under the administrative jurisdiction of the Federal land management agencies.

What is needed are resources to support humane, and orderly processing at the border, including providing additional resources for FEMA's Shelter and Services Program (SSP) and expediting work permits by reducing USCIS's backlog. H.R. 5283 provides none of this, but simply ties the hands of federal authorities. Key federal departments oppose this legislation:

- The U.S. Department of the Interior [opposes](#) the bill, because “[t]his legislation would restrict the ability of the Department and its bureaus, including the BLM, FWS, and NPS, to make decisions regarding the appropriate uses, even in emergency or other circumstances, of the lands and resources that we manage under current law.”
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture [opposes](#) the bill, stating that “USDA does not believe that H.R. 5283 would change the Agency’s current management of public lands under its administrative jurisdiction. We do not believe it is necessary and therefore do not support this legislation.”

We hope Congress will work on a bipartisan basis to modernize our outdated immigration system – H.R. 5283 is not that; please vote NO.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah Weinstein,
Executive Director