

ASYLUM SEEKERS, FAMILY SEPARATION, DENATURALIZATION, and IMMIGRATION

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=USCIS-2019-0021-0001>

<http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/news/safe-third-country-agreements-central-american-countries-eviscerate-america%E2%80%99s-asylum-system>

Comments are due by December 12 on the rule “Implementing Bilateral and Multilateral Asylum Cooperative Agreements Under the Immigration and Nationality Act.” This is the policy that allows the removal of asylum seekers arriving in the U.S. to Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. Since the majority of asylum seekers currently attempting to enter the U.S. are fleeing violence and persecution in the nations to which the US. intends to send them, the policy essentially moves asylum seekers from one dangerous situation to another. Conditions at the locations asylum-seekers are redirected to are highly unsanitary, added the threat of serious illness or injury to other risks (see the piece on the Matamoros camp below for further information). The American Immigration Council opposes this policy as “yet another heavy-handed attempt by the Trump administration to gut America’s asylum system by preventing people at the border from qualifying for any humanitarian protection in the United States. No person should be forced to seek protection in countries ill-equipped to hear their claims and where they will face the same harms from which they flee.” There are two separate offices with which you can express your concern. In each case you will need to refer to the docket number specific to that office; these are included below. According to the Regulations.gov web site, as of November 29 only seven (*yes, seven*) comments had been received on this rule change. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

OBJECT to this practice which threatens the lives and safety of legitimate asylum-seekers

- Andrew Davidson, Chief, Asylum Division, Refugee Asylum and International Operations, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 1100, Washington DC 20529-2140 [*Note: with this address, be sure to refer to Docket Number UCSIS-2019-0021*]
- Lauren Adler Reid, Assistant Director, Office of Policy, Executive Office for Immigration Review, 5107 Leesburg Pike, Suite 2616, Falls Church, VA 22041 [*Note: with this address, be sure to refer to EOIR Docket Number 19-0021*]

https://apnews.com/337b139ed4fa4d208b93d491364e04da?fbclid=IwAR1mYv58LCD5AT2ZPeJbgbrVaRPlwEeNX94ONQgXkm5tlu5A-qU_eZKZXoY

Conditions at the Matamoros camp just over the US-Mexico border to which many asylum-seekers are being sent are unsanitary and hazardous. The AP provided extensive reporting on conditions at the Matamoros camp that included persistent smoke from fires burning human waste, a scarcity of potable water, only e. coli-contaminated river water for bathing and washing clothes, and waste leaking in puddles outside toilets. AP noted reports from Doctors Without Borders that during 178 medical consultations held over three weeks in October health concerns treated included diarrhea, hypertension, diabetes, psychiatric conditions and asthma—and that over half of those treated were under the age of fifteen. As of October 1, over 11,000 asylum seekers had been redirected from the U.S. to the Matamoros camp. Helen Perry, a nurse practitioner and Global Response Management's operations director, warns that "Speaking from having seen other humanitarian crises in the world, this is one of the worst situations that I've seen. It is only going to get worse, and it is going to get worse rapidly." (Write-up 11/29/2019)

INSIST on Congressional action in response to conditions at the Matamoros camp and other sites to which asylum-seekers are being redirected

- **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

- **Representative Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), Speaker of the House, 1236 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-4965

- **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvI5sgOo5YS4/edit>

- **Find your Representative here:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNhdelcADPMfFL2c1V6iF_NDxATh0A_WLxzMt2Tlwm0/edit

CONSUMER PROTECTIONS and WORKPLACE RIGHTS

https://fortune.com/2019/11/20/latina-equal-pay-day-2019/?fbclid=IwAR1ip5INFE_jlaZjzD4eSsfDVw_rybkAq2YaRPtxy09jrSM5Vdm25Gsgdzl

Recent reporting by *Fortune* highlights the ongoing gender pay gap. Women in the state earn eighty cents on the dollar in comparison with men. As *Fortune* points out, some women are even more severely impacted by this gap. In 2017, for example, Latinx women earned just

fifty-three cents on the dollar in comparison with white men, and this number has been dropping since 2013. It has been more than 200 days since the House passed the Bipartisan Paycheck Fairness Act, H.R. 7, to make sure women and men are paid equally, but in the Senate this legislation has not yet been assigned to a committee, the first step toward a vote of the full Senate. It is past time for the Senate to act. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

DEMAND that the Senate Majority Leader ensures that the Senate take action on H.R.7

- **Senator Mitch McConnell** (R-KY), Senate Majority Leader, 217 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-2541

URGE your Senators to press for consideration of H.R.7

- **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvI5sgOo5YS4/edit>

ELECTIONS

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1356>

<https://theconversation.com/on-tv-political-ads-are-regulated-but-online-anything-goes-126553>

The FCC has long regulated political ads on TV in order to ensure fairness and transparency, but no such controls exist for online political advertising. Not only does social media expand the power to identify and target specific audiences, it also makes the spreading of disinformation easy and nearly impossible to reverse. The Honest Ads Act, S.1356, would bring online political ads under the same regulations applied to TV ads. This legislation has been with the Senate Rules and Administration Committee since May. An identical bill, H.R.2592, the Honest Ads Act, is with the House Committee on Administration. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

URGE the Senate Rules and Administration Committee to take prompt, positive action on S.1356

- **Senator Roy Blunt** (R-MO), Chair, Senate Rules and Administration Committee, 305 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-6352

- **Senator Amy Klobuchar** (D-MN), Ranking Member, Senate Rules and Administration Committee, 305 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-6352

URGE the House Administration Committee to take prompt, positive action on H.R.2595

• **Representative Zoe Lofgren** (D-CA), Chair, House Administration Committee, 1309 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2061

ENVIRONMENT

https://returntonow.net/2019/10/07/trump-administration-oks-airgun-blasting-thats-deafening-and-killing-critically-endangered-beluga-whales/?fbclid=IwAR2FO7BTdCmWirCNMymjKgXyjAKkMay9lSf8tuSaz_cwmugzsi9bMqD_0hg

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/beluga-whale>

Since September, the government has permitted nighttime air gun blasting in Cook Inlet, Alaska, home to beluga whales. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “Beluga whales are vulnerable to many stressors and threats, including pollution, habitat degradation, harassment, interactions with commercial and recreational fisheries, oil and gas exploration, disease, and other types of human disturbance such as underwater noise.” All beluga populations are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and those of Cook Inlet are supposed to receive special protections because of the small size of that breeding population. Air gun blasting, which is used for oil exploration, can be heard for miles and reaches volumes up to 250 decibels (for comparison, a loud rock concert might reach a level of 120 decibels). During the first two weeks of air gun blasting at Cook Inlet, four beluga—a bit over one percent of the Cook Inlet population—washed up dead. The Center for Biological Diversity and the Cook Inletkeeper have filed suit to end air gun blasting in the area. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

DEMAND better protections for Cook Inlet belugas and an end to air gun blasting in the area

• **Andrew Wheeler**, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20460, (202) 564-4700

• **Representative Raúl M. Grijalva**, Chair, House Natural Resources Committee, 1324 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6065

• **Representative Jared Huffman** (D-CA), Chair, Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife, 1324 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6065

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=EPA-HQ-OW-2009-0819-7106>

https://www.nrdc.org/experts/nrdc/coal-plants-get-pass-pollute-our-waterways?utm_source=tw&utm_medium=tweet&utm_campaign=CleanWater&fbclid=IwAR2NDz5N_Vz6sTyHzK1wcUI1fC5PWlWu7Zolpx4fs3KJ0A9N3ziROaj7Akg

While the title may sound snooze-worthy, the proposed government rules change Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Steam Electric Power Generating Point Source Category will have a huge impact. Under this proposal the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would relax waste standards for coal-fired power plants, a rollback of Obama-era regulations on water pollution and waste management that could help struggling coal plants stay in operation. It would also roll back an Obama administration regulation outlining the types of technology that coal-fired power plants must use to capture and treat the wastewater that flows out of their facilities. As the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) points out, power plants are responsible for 30% of all toxic pollution dumped into surface waters—and that's before these rules changes are put into effect. John Devine, the NRDC's director of federal water policy, explains "The EPA's proposal would expose millions of people to a toxic brew of mercury, arsenic, lead, and selenium—pollutants that can cause neurological disorders and cardiovascular disease and increase the risk of cancer." As of November 29, only thirty-one comments had been filed in response to this proposal. Comments are due by January 21, 2020. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

OBJECT to this rule change that will allow the worst of coal-fired power plants to continue polluting our water—and contributing to the global climate crisis

• **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, EPA Docket Center, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2009-0819, Office of Science and Technology Docket, Mail Code 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FS-2019-0023-0001>

https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2019/08/trump-open-alaskas-tongass-national-forest-worlds-largest-remaining-temperate-rainforest-logging-mining.html?utm_source=fb&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=Lands
<https://cdxnodengn.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-II/public/action/eis/details?eisId=277660>

A proposed rule change that would exempt Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule is open for official comments through December 17. Under "Special Areas, Roadless Area Conservation: National Forest System Lands in Alaska," Tongass, the world's largest remaining temperate rain forest, would then be open for mining, logging, energy

extraction, and the road-building that accompany those. Not only would the proposed rule change lead to deforestation of a key part of the global ecosystem, it would also enable continued reliance on fossil fuels at a time when we need to be developing sustainable energy options. Unlike many other proposed rules changes, this one has garnered a great many comments (27,522 as of November 29), probably because there are big profits to be made destroying wilderness. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

OBJECT to this threat to unspoiled wilderness—and our planet’s “lungs” [*Note: Be sure your comment includes the identifier FS-2019-0023*]

- **Alaska Roadless Rule**, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 21628, Juneau, AK 99802-1628

ETHICS and SEPARATION of POWERS

Former National Security Advisor John Bolton could shed further light on the Trump administration’s efforts to use security funding for Ukraine as a lever to force a partisan political investigation against the Bidens. At the moment, however, he is refusing to testify until a court ruling on his legal obligations is handed down. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

TELL Bolton that defending the Constitution shouldn’t require a court order and **INSIST** that he provide testimony on the Trump Administrations dealing with Ukraine

- **John Bolton**, c/o Cooper and Kirk, PLLC, 1523 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036

https://theappeal.org/in-a-private-facebook-group-california-police-brag-about-breaking-state-law-to-help-ice/?fbclid=IwAR3apkUaCZ_aBeCP1A1tj9O4zyOXqNA8FYInrCF374uBvzrzAIW5MvyFwKw

Under the California Values Act, which went into effect in 2018, California is a sanctuary state. Among other things, that means that the state’s law enforcement officers are prohibited from making sole use of an individual’s immigration status as the justification for stopping, investigating, or arresting that individual. In addition, state law enforcement officers are prohibited from cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers seeking

to arrest and deport individuals solely on the basis of their immigration status. *The Appeal* has reported on a 12,000-plus member Facebook group on which California law enforcement officers brag about the refusal to comply with sanctuary law and their cooperation with ICE in the arrest and deportation of undocumented immigrants. “There’s ways around stupid-ass liberal state policy,” noted one member of the group. Another described what was essentially an ongoing exchange with border patrol officers, in which state police who turned over individuals with uncertain immigration status were rewarded with boxes of ammunition. The group page also refers to the Governor of California as “Gavin Nazism.” (Write-up 11/29/2019)

ASK California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to investigate these activities and other violations of sanctuary laws by state law enforcement

- **Attorney General Xavier Becerra**, 1300 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 952-5225

GENERAL DECENCY

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FAR-2019-0004-0001>

<https://westernvaluesproject.org/plans-to-privatize-national-parks-outlined-in-trump-admin-memo-would-enrich-donors-special-interests/>

A proposed federal rule, “Federal Acquisition Regulation: Recreational Services on Federal Lands,” would privatize national park campgrounds, then extend similar privatization to the Bureau of Land Management, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. The rule would allow electrification of campgrounds via expanded utilities, food trucks and camp stores within parks, and blackouts and restrictions on senior admissions discounts. These changes will incentivize profit over conservation, benefitting wealthy investors, while raising costs and reducing opportunities for ordinary Americans to enjoy our country’s natural beauty. As of November 29 only *three comments* had been received on this proposal. Comments can be submitted through December 20. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

DEMAND parks for people, not for profiteering [*Note: be sure to cite FAR Case 2019-002 in your comment*]

- **General Services Administration**, Regulatory Secretariat Division (MVCB), Attn: Lois Mandell, 1800 F St. NW, 2nd Floor, Washington DC 20405

HEALTH and HEALTHCARE

https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2019-11-21/uc-religious-restrictions-catholic-medical-schools?fbclid=IwAR2zXzggAwLt_qGYWn-zKO7Qeh7JHJEhEQNKGIImDY5rHV541zq5WY0Q67CU

The University of California's training contracts with Catholic hospital chains are constraining personnel and students at the University of California's six medical schools, as well as in some nursing, nurse practitioner, physician assistant and pharmacy programs. Under the contracts with these programs, Catholic Church strictures on the provision of healthcare must be followed whenever a UC-associated student or staff member is working at a Catholic facility. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "In some cases the restrictions could prohibit UC personnel at [Catholic] facilities from even counseling patients about medical options that conflict with church doctrine, such as contraception and abortion." Documents regulating Catholic healthcare issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops bar almost all abortions, sterilizations, and provision of contraceptives. This despite the fact that the California Constitution prohibits UC from allowing religious considerations from governing its operations. (Write-up 11/29/2019)

INSIST that UC end its contracts with facilities that place religious restrictions above best care as determined by healthcare practitioners and their patients

• **President Janet Napolitano**, Office of the President, University of California, 1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607

HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

A proposed federal rule, "Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources; Health and Human Services Grants Regulation," would "align" grants with "new legislation, nondiscrimination laws, and Supreme Court decisions," which sounds sensible until one discovers that these "alignments" would privilege faith-based organizations' "right" to deny

services to LGBT individuals over those individual's right to be treated in a nondiscriminatory manner. A significant portion of federal healthcare spending on human services is provided not by the government itself, but by providers receiving grants from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Logic would dictate that such federal spending should honor the concept of separation of church and state as embodied in the First Amendment, but the current administration apparently wants to allow church-state crossover to become easier. According to the *Bay Area Reporter*, "Sharon McGowan, legal director for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, said the proposed grant rule 'rolls back critical protections against discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion, and in doing so, puts at risk some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including LGBT people who are poor or experiencing homelessness; LGBT seniors and LGBT youth in out-of-home care, including foster children in need of loving families; people living with HIV; and many others.'" Comments are due by December 19 and must be made electronically "because of staff and resource limitations." (Write-up 11/29/2019)

CRITICIZE this proposal that would sacrifice the majority's right to be free from religious discrimination in order to allow specific faith-based groups to engage in such discrimination [Note: normally we look for "postcardable" opportunities for this list, but this issue deserves a response, even if it can't be "postcarded"]

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<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/11/19/2019-24385/office-of-the-assistant-secretary-for-financial-resources-health-and-human-services-grants#open-comment>

https://projects.propublica.org/graphics/lgbtq-rights-rollback?utm_source=pardot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=majorinvestigations

ProPublica has recently published a list of thirty-one examples of the ways the current administration is systematically undoing guarantees of rights for LGBT Americans. Some highlights from that list—

- banning transgendered individuals from joining the military
- reversing the Justice Department's position on the Civil Rights Act's applicability to transgendered individuals
- submitting court briefings in support of employers being able to discriminate against LGBT employees
- rescinding trans-inclusive Title IX guidance

- halting investigation of discrimination complaints filed by transgender students over access to school facilities
- pressuring 4H to withdraw guidance that welcomed gay and transgendered youth
- ending Obama-era healthcare protections prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation in some Medicaid programs
- dropping requirements for hospitals to develop policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation
- shifting Health and Human Services' emphasis on equal access to "protection of conscience and free exercise of religion" for healthcare providers
- gutting protections allowing transgendered individuals equal access to homeless services by "protection of conscience" support of organizations providing these services
- cancelling a survey that would have assessed the effectiveness of an LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative
- allowing foster care agencies to reject potential foster parents on the basis of sexual orientation
- issuing guidelines to use "biological sex," rather than gender identity when making housing and facilities assignments in prisons
- releasing a statement opposed to the Equality Act, which has been passed by the House, but has yet to be taken up by the Senate (Write-up 11/29/2019)

DECRY this systematic removal of basic protections and insist on Congressional action to protect LGBTQ Americans

• **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvi5sgOo5YS4/edit>

• **Find your Representative here:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNhdelcADPMfFL2c1V6iF_NDxATh0A_WLxzMt2TIwm0/edit