April 18, 2023

Chairman Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler  
Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Southern Border Communities Coalition Statement for the House Judiciary Markup of the Border Security and Enforcement Act of 2023

Dear Committee Leaders,

We, the Southern Border Communities Coalition, write in strong opposition to the Border Security and Enforcement Act of 2023 that the House Judiciary Committee will mark up on April 19th. The bill would violate human rights at the southern border by harming children, destabilizing families and blocking access to asylum, violating our international commitments and signed treaties.

The southern border region has always been a place of hope, welcoming and opportunity. Right now, our nation has both the chance and responsibility to live up to our shared values, to uphold human dignity, and develop just, humane and functional systems to welcome vulnerable newcomers. Yet, this bill does not provide moral or constructive policy solutions, and instead will lead to devastating harms that southern communities have witnessed in the past, including the caging of children and families and putting vulnerable asylum seekers in harm’s way.

Specifically, the bill would:

1. Violate our international responsibility towards people fleeing danger by making it nearly impossible for migrants to seek asylum in the U.S.
2. Endanger lives by making it significantly easier to deport asylum seekers, including families and children.
3. Restart the failed and dangerous Remain in Mexico program for all migrants, including unaccompanied children;
4. Violate international rights of children by requiring arbitrary detention of children and their families attempting to enter the U.S. to seek asylum.
5. Subject all unaccompanied children to an expedited removal process, harming children, particularly those in danger of trafficking;
6. Criminalize and penalize immigrants compelled to overstay their visa when Congress should focus on solutions that regularize the status of long-term residents by fixing our broken immigration system;

The proposals in this bill are dangerous and will bring suffering, harm and violations of our human rights to our southern border region. Instead, we urge you and your colleagues in the House to create a system that uplifts human rights and our commitment to moral and functional policies.

Sincerely,

Lilian A. Serrano
Director
Southern Border Communities Coalition