Southern Border Communities Coalition

Urges Congress to Reject the “Secure the Border Act of 2023” (H.R. 2)

The Southern Border Communities Coalition urges Members of Congress to vote ‘no’ on “Secure the Border Act of 2023” (H.R.2). This legislation would inflict incalculable harm on immigrant communities, asylum seekers and the millions who call the border region home and intentionally sow chaos and cruelty in our region.

The southern border region has always been a place of hope, welcoming and opportunity. Our communities should not be treated as war zones or mischaracterized as unsafe or unwelcoming. Families and children should not be locked in cages. Those seeking safety at our border should be treated with dignity. We urge Congress to reject this extreme bill and focus on creating just policies to help our communities thrive, uplift human rights, and create humane systems to manage migration and welcome vulnerable newcomers.

SBCC opposes H.R.2 because:

- **H.R. 2 would violate human rights at the southern border** by forcing the construction of more deadly border wall, expanding intrusive surveillance of our communities and harming migrating families seeking protection while 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**, but the provisions in this bill would **deny urgently needed resources for community organizations providing humanitarian assistance** to vulnerable newcomers at the border.

- **Policymakers must seize the opportunity and fulfill their responsibility to live up to our shared values, to uphold human dignity** and develop just and humane systems to welcome vulnerable newcomers.

- **This bill would require family detention for any families attempting to enter the U.S. to seek asylum.** Border communities have witnessed the devastating physical and mental health harms and human rights violations of “kids in cages”. No one should be detained for exercising their human right to seek asylum.

- **This bill would effectively end the U.S. asylum system, endangering lives and violating international asylum law and treaties by denying access to asylum for individuals asskng safety between ports of entry and restarting the failed and dangerous “Remain in Mexico” program that forces migrants to inhume conditions in Mexico instead of allowing them to exert their legal right to seek protection in the United States.**
- The bill would **needlessly prevent migrants from flying out of border regions** to their final destinations by barring TSA from accepting documents issued by ICE or CBP after processing migrants.

- **Border militarization is deadly and dangerous to those who call the border region home and migrants alike**, leading to over-policing of border communities and over 270 deaths at the hands of CBP since 2010.

- This bill would further militarize the border by ballooning the number of unaccountable Border Patrol agents to at least 22,000 while loosening hiring requirements and requiring the use of intrusive aerial drones that violate the privacy of border residents.

- This bill would mandate that **border communities must be denied equal protection under the law** by requiring the waiving of “all laws” to expedite wall construction, exempting the borderlands from dozens of protective laws like the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the Endangered Species Act, as well as exposing **American taxpayers to waste and abuse** by waiving of contracting laws.

- It’s time to rethink how we govern our borders and move away from enforcement and deterrence only policies, towards rights-respecting policies that uphold human rights and dignity for all people who live, work and travel through our borders.

- **Resources should be invested in programs to help communities thrive, like education and job creation**, not wasted on policies that violate human rights.

Please reach out to Jennifer Johnson ([jjohnson@southernborder.org](mailto:jjohnson@southernborder.org)) and Lili Serrano ([lilian@alliancesd.org](mailto:lilian@alliancesd.org)) with any questions.