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NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC DEFENDERS URGE FEDERAL LAWMAKERS TO REJECT THE MOST CATASTROPHIC IMMIGRATION REFORM EFFORT IN A GENERATION

New York, NY - On Friday, the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) - the nation's first public defender program for detained immigrants - issued the following statement in response to reports that the Biden administration is negotiating an aid package with federal lawmakers that would effectively dismantle the U.S. asylum system:

“The immigration policy plan being negotiated in the Senate behind closed doors represents the greatest threat to the human rights of immigrants since the Clinton administration rewrote immigration law in 1996.

“If reports of the negotiations are true, the White House and Senate are contemplating an immigration system where every migrant is either immediately expelled without an asylum screening or mandatorily detained without due process. This is not a ‘fair, orderly, and humane’ immigration system, as promised by the Biden administration, but a wholesale dismantling of asylum in favor of the mass detention of asylum seekers.

“This proposal would represent a shocking escalation of the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies, going beyond Title 42 to eliminating asylum and instituting the mass detention of migrants, including children, without offering any pretext of public health or national security. In doing so, the Biden administration is not only violating international human rights law and the U.S.'s own obligations under the Refugee Convention and Protocol, but is knowingly seeking to cage thousands of people in facilities that investigation after investigation has concluded are inhumane, unnecessary, and wasteful.

“As the nation's first public defender program for detained immigrants, we cannot emphasize enough how cruel, destructive, and unacceptable this shift in immigration policy would be, and we urge federal lawmakers to reject it. It is also incumbent on our state lawmakers, now more than ever, to prove they care about the safety and well-being of every New Yorker by passing the Dignity Not Detention Act and the New York For All Act so that New York state does not willingly participate in this catastrophic annihilation of human rights and dignity.”

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