

EVANGELICAL IMMIGRATION table.

Bethany Christian Services

June 1, 2021

Council for Christian
Colleges & Universities

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris and Members of Congress,

Ethics and Religious
Liberty Commission of the
Southern Baptist
Convention

Over the past several months, just as over the past several years, we have witnessed with concern the large number of unaccompanied children and families seeking safety at the U.S.-Mexico border, particularly from the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Faith and Community
Empowerment

While we urge the US government to treat these individuals and families with compassion and to ensure they receive the protections available to them under U.S. law, we also lament the reality that so many feel such desperation as to flee their homes, communities and countries. We are writing to urge you to leverage the influence and resources of the U.S. government to address the root causes that fuel emigration from Central America's Northern Triangle region.

National Association of
Evangelicals

National Latino
Evangelical Coalition

This response should be holistic in addressing both the driving factors of this migration and the U.S. immigration policies that govern an immigrant's arrival. To address the root causes of migration in Central America, a resilient development approach must be embraced which recognizes the different risks and vulnerabilities the countries face.

The Wesleyan Church

World Relief

A critical facet of this holistic response should include U.S. funding and support to non-governmental and civil society organizations addressing issues of poverty, violence, corruption and humanitarian needs of Central Americans. Faith-based organizations play a vital role in reducing poverty and expanding opportunity and should be considered vital partners to the U.S. government in these efforts. In addition, faith-based organizations have unique relationships with local churches, providing unmatched access, building trust among local communities and building resilience among community members.

World Vision

Offering foreign assistance to come alongside resilient Central Americans working to help their own countries flourish pays dividends, not only by demonstrating the goodwill of the United States and protecting human lives made in God's image, but also reducing the need to spend taxpayer money on caring for unaccompanied children and processing large numbers of asylum seekers who arrive at the U.S. border.

Underlying each of these root causes of migration is governmental corruption, which exacerbates poverty, leads to impunity from crime that contributes to high rates of violence and robs people of hope that the situation will change. Faith-based and civil society organizations in Central America are already hard at work providing hope for a better future. By meeting physical needs, leading reforms in the public education and health systems, investigating emblematic cases and

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upholding the rule of law, they help create societies that better serve Central Americans. The U.S. government should support such organizations that have the capacity, will and experience to address corruption, while also leveraging U.S. diplomacy to expose corrupt practices and politicians while praising progress.

The root causes of migration stem from generational problems. A long-term commitment to addressing these issues is critical to achieving positive change. While there are no quick solutions to these challenges, and the dynamics in each of these three countries are different, we also have seen that change is possible, and that it need not take generations. Our government can play an essential role in addressing corruption and providing assistance, which is both a reflection of the generosity and compassion of the American people – including many motivated by their Christian faith and convictions – and in our own national interest as we seek a more humane, orderly immigration process. An application of these holistic solutions will inspire a reality where no one will be forced to emigrate to the U.S. under duress.

We pray that God will grant each of you wisdom as you seek to address these challenges.

Sincerely,

Scott Arbeiter, President, World Relief

Shirley V. Hoogstra, President, Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

Hyepin Im, President & CEO, Faith and Community Empowerment

Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Russell Moore, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Chris Palusky, President & CEO, Bethany Christian Services

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Wayne Schmidt, General Superintendent, The Wesleyan Church