



## **Migrant Center for Human Rights** **Protecting the Persecuted**

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

**San Antonio, Texas (August 10, 2020): Migrant Center Submits Public Comment Calling on DHS and DOJ to Immediately Rescind the Proposed Rule Denying Protection to Healthy Asylum Seekers Simply for Traveling through a Country with COVID-19**

The Migrant Center for Human Rights (“Migrant Center”) submits a [Public Comment](#) to the DHS and the DOJ in opposition to its Proposed Rule on the [Security Bars and Processing](#), published in the Federal Register at 85 F.R. 41201 on July 9, 2020. The Proposed Rule redefines what it means to be “danger to the security of the United States” to include asylum seekers – but not other immigrants – who have traveled through a country with an infectious disease even if they test negative.

We oppose the Proposed Rule because it illegally usurps the power of Congress to set law by rewriting the definition of the security bar, contravenes the U.S.’s *non-refoulement* obligations under domestic and international law to refrain from returning refugees to places where their lives or freedom are in danger, and rolls back four decades of established legal precedent, resulting in the disappearance of refugee protections that have long been accepted as a key part of who we are as a nation.

The Proposed Rule will subject vulnerable asylum seekers to impermissibly vague, overbroad, and unlawful standards with virtually no due process protections, while simultaneously doing nothing to protect the American people. We oppose these proposed changes because they would deny most asylum seekers meaningful access to counsel, their right to respond to the charges against them and present evidence on their behalf, and any access to judicial review. Accordingly, we are urging the Administration to withdraw the Proposed Rule in its entirety and instead dedicate efforts – and our taxpayer dollars – to advancing policies that respect individuals’ legal right to seek asylum.

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The Migrant Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides legal services to immigrants detained at the South Texas Detention Complex in Pearsall Texas. This facility is the third largest in the country and holds up to 1,900 immigrants on a given day. The Migrant Center works almost exclusively with asylum seekers and has served approximately 600 asylum seekers in the last three years. Our team’s legal expertise includes more than eight years of immigration removal defense litigation experience, much of this working on asylum cases. As a non-profit organization, we are particularly aware of the unique challenges asylum seekers face in trying to navigate our legal process from inside detention.

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