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Wind Of The Spirit

Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.

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“An Attack on My Family”: Immigrants and Allies Condemn Biden Budget as a Throwback to Trump

New Jersey immigrant advocacy, civil liberties, human rights and faith-based groups reacted strongly against the 2024 Budget introduced by President Biden on Thursday. They characterized the Budget’s immigration enforcement funding as an abandonment of immigrant communities and a cave-in to electoral concerns.

“The proposed budget shows the significant disconnect between the Biden administration and immigrant communities in the U.S. It shows that President Biden is not committed to prioritizing vulnerable populations in his policies. Instead, we are seeing a rollback to his predecessor’s worst and cruelest policies,” **said Erik Cruz, with the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice.**

"President Biden's proposed budget, which will increase ICE & CBP budgets by \$800 million and add hundreds of new border patrol officers, will further perpetuate family separation and lead to more deaths and abuses of immigrant families like mine. ICE & CBP are rogue agencies and must be held accountable — not given slush funds to separate families. The President's budget, and support of Title 42 and threat to reinstate family detention, are an attack on my family," **said Angie Tamayo, member of Make the Road New Jersey.** “We need to decrease funding for ICE & CBP and pass a pathway to citizenship immediately.”

The advocates point to a pattern in which Biden has announced the same plan as Trump to disqualify most migrants from seeking asylum at the southern border, and is reportedly considering resuming detention of migrant families, which the medical and psychiatric community widely opposes and which Biden himself ended two years ago.

"This has been an ongoing struggle for our people, and no pledges have been maintained as we see in what we are experiencing today. ICE and many other private prison partners continue to get huge funding, resulting in threats and family separations for immigrant communities," **said Seongwon Kim with Minkwon Center.**

In addition, the Budget calls for a \$4.7 billion “contingency fund” for DHS agencies to deal with “surges” at the southern border. This was characterized as a “slush fund” with no strings attached, for agencies which already have too little oversight.

Though the groups welcomed commitments to remedy citizenship backlogs and rebuild refugee resettlement, they see a lack of consistency, and have a loss of confidence in Biden’s commitment to immigrant communities. “We can’t keep offering piecemeal protections for a fraction of the population in need, while conditioning every one of them on overwhelming punitive measures,” said **Adam McGovern of Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center**. “The detention and deportation machine presumes the criminality of the huddled masses yearning to find safe haven here. And this budget shows Biden conceding the extremist narrative of immigrants not as human beings who have a problem, but as people who **are** a problem.”

The advocates suspect that the President is eyeing his widely-expected 2024 reelection campaign, at the expense of his own professed principles. “It will be up to Congress to act as a check on the President’s wayward conscience,” **concluded Amy Torres, with New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice**. “Majorities of everyday Americans from all parties say immigration is good for our country and support reforms like a pathway to citizenship for millions of longtime residents. Those who say they speak for us better listen to us.”

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