

SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD **NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER** *Rise Up AND Act for Justice*

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Let Asylum Seekers In Covid Crisis Compassion

Statement by Lawrence E. Couch Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

At a time of national and international tragedy, we must come together and welcome those seeking refuge, particularly refugees on our southern border.

We understand that the Administration is planning to announce at any time now a new rule enabling the Border Patrol to capture and immediately return to Mexico anyone who is found crossing the border. It is unclear at this point if this pending order includes official points of entry. So instead of asylum seekers receiving their lawful due process, they would be rounded up and immediately returned to Mexico.

The world is gripped in fear and crisis. Many of these men, women and children have journeyed for weeks and months. They have left unspeakable violence. Now is most certainly not the time to force them to huddle in unsafe conditions in Mexico as the coronavirus sweeps across our globe.

Closer to the American spirit can be found in the announcement last night that because of coronavirus, ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] will stop its cruel rounding up immigrants who pose no threat to the public. The Border Patrol should do the same and allow refugees to pass and find safety in the United States.

<u>The National Advocacy Center</u> educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.

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