



Kino Border Initiative
Iniciativa Kino para la Frontera

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Florence Project and Kino Border Initiative Double Down on Calls to End Title 42

Today, the Florence Project and Kino Border Initiative once again call on the federal government to end the Title 42 border closure immediately and in its entirety. Since President Biden took office [Human Rights First](#) has recorded “at least 9,886 kidnappings, torture, rape, and other violent attacks on people blocked in or expelled to Mexico due to the Title 42 policy.” Everyday people that we meet who are displaced in Nogales, Sonora tell us that they are in severe danger, facing violence, racism, and other potentially life-threatening circumstances. This policy inflicts tremendous, irreversible harm on those subjected to it, and it is long past time for it to end. One migrant, Jose, shared: “When you come from another country, you are a commodity. You are not a citizen. In fact, they don’t even see you as a person. So it is not an option to stay here. Your life is in danger. And going back is not an option either because your life is also in danger. At least in my case, my life is in danger if I return. And the life of my family.”

In response to Arizona Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly’s request that the Biden administration extend Title 42 until it is “completely ready to execute and coordinate a comprehensive plan” to roll it back, we say that there is simply no excuse for continuing to leave thousands of people stranded in harm’s way even one day longer.

Senators Kelly and Sinema cloak their request in concerns for the burdens imposed on local nonprofits that serve migrants. They don’t speak for us on this matter. Reception and legal

services organizations in Arizona are ready and able to welcome asylum seekers once Title 42 ends. All we ask is that the government provide its fair share of funding for these reception and legal efforts and coordinate with us as partners. However, we do not believe that any further delay in ending Title 42 will lead to better funding, planning or coordination; it will only provide the Biden administration and federal agencies with further opportunity to drag their feet and search for alternative ways for deterring and excluding people seeking protection.

The Senators' solution - keeping Title 42 in place disregards the efforts that advocates and border based non-profit service providers have been engaging in throughout the last two years, urging the both administrations to end Title 42 and stop ignoring individuals and families in desperate need of humanitarian protection. Asking to continue the use of this inhumane policy not only denotes a total lack of empathy for impacted peoples' suffering, but it is also an affront to their fight for their right to seek asylum.

We agree with Senators Sinema and Kelly that the Biden administration should have an ascertainable plan to end Title 42 safely and humanely and should have begun coordinating with service providers months ago. However, there is little to be gained by continuing this policy to put a plan in place when federal agencies have already had over two years to plan for an end to what was supposed to be a short-term emergency measure.

Sadly, the Biden administration has not been effective in preparing for the inevitable end of Title 42, but people seeking protection must not be the ones to pay the price for the administration's lack of moral leadership on this issue.

Tellingly, the letter from Senators Sinema and Kelly treats Title 42 as a border management and security measure, rather than exclusively a public health measure, further exposing that public health has only ever been a pretext to keep asylum seekers out of the country. Our asylum system is borne of a history of the unspeakable harms humans inflict upon one another and fundamentally exists to respond to humanitarian need. Title 42 weaponizes the very access to asylum as a form of deterrence, which is as morally reprehensible as it is illegal.

We must end Title 42 immediately and in its entirety and restore access to a safe, fair, and humane asylum system. The Florence Project and Kino Border Initiative stand ready to welcome asylum seekers and look forward to working with partners in the community and in the federal government to restore access to asylum.

References:

- [California Welcoming Task Force statement demanding end of T42, 3/18/22](#)