

**CWS Statement to the House Judiciary Committee, pertaining to its [hearing](#), “The Border Crisis: Is the Law Being Faithfully Executed?”**

Church World Service (CWS) is a 77-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions, as well as resettlement offices and affiliates, home study and post release services, and asylum seeker case management services across the country. At the border, CWS works to monitor conditions in government facilities and coordinates with shelter networks in both the U.S. and Mexico to meet asylum seekers’ needs, such as shelter, food, medical assistance, counseling, and legal support. We urge Congress to use this hearing to catalyze support for concrete solutions that treat arriving migrants with dignity and ensure that they have the resources they need to thrive as they enter American communities.

**CWS urges Congress to recognize and work to address the urgent humanitarian needs of migrants who remain in overcrowded, under-resourced shelters on both sides of the border.** CWS has witnessed [increasingly dire conditions](#) in overwhelmed civil society-led shelters across Mexico, which are operating at far above capacity as migrants face significant and unlawful asylum restrictions at the U.S. border. For those who do make it across, many have been forced to stay for extended periods in CBP holding cells -- often called perreras (“dog kennels”) and hieleras (“iceboxes”). Congress should investigate how recent U.S. asylum restrictions have contributed to unacceptable conditions for migrants and seek solutions that will alleviate overcrowding in Mexico and provide for swift release from CBP custody. Congress must conduct rigorous oversight over the administration to ensure dignified processes for migrants fleeing violence and uphold protections enshrined in the Refugee Act of 1980 and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

**CWS urges Congress to provide robust resources to shelter networks and communities along the border and in the interior.** As shelters play a larger role in driving more coordinated and more effective migrant processing and welcome efforts, Congress can play a supporting role by ensuring greater funding and flexibility. One key avenue for this support is the Shelter and Services Program (SSP), which Congress must ensure is well-funded and responsive to the needs of service providers. See [here](#) for additional recommendations on how Congress and the administration can support an effective and well-funded Shelter and Services Program.

**CWS urges Congress to promote programs that support asylum seekers beyond the first 30 days after their arrival.** SSP funding is generally limited to welcome efforts for the first thirty days after migrants arrive. But with many asylum seekers likely to be stuck in immigration court proceedings for years, Congress must work to establish federal support beyond this initial period. Community-based case management programs like the [Case Management Pilot Program](#) are cost-effective strategies to promote the successful integration of new arrivals into American communities. Congress can further address this challenge by streamlining access to work authorization for asylum seekers, including by funding USCIS to tackle backlogs and passing H.R. 1325, the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act.

Our nation’s diverse faith traditions compel us to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the sojourner. We are called by our sacred texts to approach one another with love – not fear – and to affirm the value and dignity of all, including immigrants and asylum seekers. We urge Congress to affirm the dignity of arriving migrants and recognize the spirit of welcome that animates communities and shelter networks across the country. With proper resources and investment, including via the programs and policies described above, we can build a more orderly, more efficient, more humane process for border arrivals without overburdening border communities.