April 12, 2018

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

We the undersigned civil rights, advocacy, and community organizations write to ask you to join us in rejecting the xenophobia and fear that are driving calls to deploy National Guard troops to the border.

In response to news of a migrant caravan, in which women, children, and men travel together to safely reach Mexico or the United States, far-right media began raising fears and sensationalizing the story. In fact, border crossings remain at historic lows. The caravan is a reflection of individuals who want only to live in safety, and U.S. law recognizes the right of such individuals to request protection.

The border is already heavily militarized. Border Patrol is one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the country and as recently as March 23rd, when Congress denied the Administration's request to appropriate additional funds to hire more border patrol agents, the Department of Homeland Security was unable to adequately justify the need for more agents. In fact, throughout the current fiscal year, the average border patrol agent assigned to the southwest border apprehends just one person every 17 days. If we don't need more Border Patrol agents, we definitely don't need the National Guard.

Yet anti-immigrant and white nationalist provocateurs have latched onto this false narrative. Jeff Schwilk, a longtime anti-immigrant extremist and former Minutemen leader called the caravan a "coordinated, organized effort by foreign criminals and open border operatives to try to infiltrate our sovereign nation." The white nationalist group Identity Evropa, whose members participated in the deadly Charlottesville protests, have started a campaign calling for the Trump administration to "stop the invasion."

Unfortunately, far-right agitation has led President Trump to order the National Guard to the border. This decision is not based on policy considerations. Instead, it's a response to political concerns from the President's base. We respectfully urge you to decline to send California troops to the border.

While migrants seeking safety do not pose a security risk, far-right elements may. In 2014, women and children fleeing violence in Central America were subjected to intimidating protests from anti-immigrant activists in California and Arizona. In Murrieta, CA, buses carrying these women and children were confronted and forced to turn around and relocate to a different city. The 2018 caravan, however, has received attention from hardcore elements of the far-right that are much more prone to violence than those who protested four years ago. Public statements

from governors and attorneys general denouncing vigilante violence could help dissuade these elements and avoid tragedy.

Fueling anti-immigrant and white nationalist activity with action based on this story only increases the risk of violent confrontation. We respectfully ask you to decline to send California troops to the border. We also ask that you make a public statement condemning any vigilante violence at or near the border and upholding shared values of inclusion.

Sincerely,

America's Voice Education Fund
America's Voice Ohio
Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus
Alliance San Diego
Arkansas United Community Coalition
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
CASA
Christian Community Development Association
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
CREDO
Defending Rights & Dissent
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos
Faith in Public Life
Florida Immigrant Coalition
Franciscan Action Network
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Indivisible
Legal Voice
Laredo Immigrant Alliance
Las Imaginistas
Latin America Working Group
Migrant Rights Collective
Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition
MomsRising
MPower Change
Muslim Justice League
Neta RGV
Northern Jaguar Project
OneAmerica
People for the American Way
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Sierra Club
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southern Border Communities Coalition

Southern Poverty Law Center
Southwest Environmental Center
Surge Reproductive Justice
Texas Organizing Project
Unitarian Universalist Association
United We Dream
Voces de la Frontera
Voto Latino
Western States Center