



# AMERICAN GATEWAYS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**December 2023**

## **From the Desk of Edna Yang, Co-Executive Director**

As the year comes to a close, we at American Gateways have mixed emotions about 2023.

On the one hand, this year saw the power of advocates working together to advocate for people fleeing persecution in their home countries. For little to no cost to clients, we represented over 300 people with asylum and related claims this year and helped thousands more with education and advocacy.

We also continued our crucial work to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking as they secure legal protections to ensure their safety. This year, our team of dedicated lawyers and accredited representatives took on cases for over 200 survivors and their families so that they could work toward the stability needed to rebuild their lives.

On the other hand, this year saw the creation and passage of a number of hateful policies targeting immigrants and refugees that will make our state less welcoming and less safe for all of us.

Senate Bill 4 of the Fourth Special Session, which is awaiting signature by Governor Abbott, would make unauthorized entry into the state a class B misdemeanor. This would become a felony depending on the person's criminal history and, notably, would let a judge or county magistrate order the person deported, despite the fact they have the right to apply for immigration relief under our federal laws.

It is the federal government, not the state, that regulates our immigration laws. Local officials should not be deputized as customs and border protection agents, especially when

they don't have the proper training or guidance to do so. Our state should work with the federal government to push for reform and real solutions to help immigrants coming to the US and the communities working to receive them.

Racial profiling is already rampant across our state, and this and the many other dangerous proposals passed by the Texas Legislature will encourage more over-policing, especially in communities of color. These laws will catch innocent Texans working to assist those in need in the criminal system and waste precious tax payer dollars. They are political stunts that do absolutely nothing to help our communities or fix what is not working with our immigration system.

At American Gateways, we are privileged to work with brave people from around the world working to improve their lives and those of their families. We will continue our work, even in the face of xenophobic policies, to push for comprehensive immigration reform. We will recognize the humanity and dignity of those seeking protection here and honor the work of the communities providing needed assistance and resources.

We wish you a restful and peaceful holiday season, and we'll come back recharged in January to champion the dignity and human rights of immigrants, refugees and survivors of persecution, torture, conflict and human trafficking. We appreciate your continued support which is critical to ensuring that the fundamental rights of immigrants seeking safety and hope are protected. You can support our work through a donation [here](#).

**Donate Today**

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