

Sin Barreras/Without Barriers Policy Statement

More Attacks on Asylum - June 6, 2019

Sin Barreras strongly condemns newly proposed Administration policies that target asylum seekers. These new rules would limit options for relief, create new fees for an asylum application, and eliminate work permits for most asylum seekers. None of these mean-spirited measures address root causes that are forcing people to flee their homes; instead, they would make the process worse for everyone.

Charging a Fee to Apply for Asylum

Applying for asylum protection has been free since the modern system was created almost 40 years ago. Since many asylum seekers flee with only the clothes on their back, charging people asking for protection flies in the face of America's promises to protect the vulnerable. No one should be charged for safety from persecution.

Requiring an asylum application fee would be even more devastating for the tens of thousands of asylum-seekers held in immigration detention while they pursue their cases who are paid virtually nothing for "voluntary work." This financial obstacle would cause more people to abandon their asylum claims—and, of course, have been designed for that purpose

Banning Work Authorization

Six months after applying for asylum, people have the right to apply for authorization that permits them to work legally while they wait for a court decision on their application.

Under the new rules, asylum seekers who enter the United States between ports of entry would be banned from getting work authorization. Since asylum cases can take years, many people could go hungry or face homelessness under such a policy.

"Asylum-Only" Immigration Court

The Administration also proposed two new regulations affecting the immigration court process itself. One would place asylum seekers who pass the credible fear interview into "asylum-only" immigration court proceedings, which would limit their options for protection. Asylum-only proceedings would mean either you win asylum or you are

deported. Unlike regular immigration court proceedings, other options for staying in the country would not be available.

Accelerated Court Hearings

A fourth proposed regulation calls for all asylum cases to be heard within six-month except in “exceptional circumstances.” Now, due to a large immigration court backlog, non-detained asylum seekers may wait years for their cases to be heard. Requiring *all* asylum cases to be heard within six months would place a huge strain on the system. For those without asylum applications, waiting times could increase by years. It would also make it harder for asylum seekers to get a lawyer, knowing that cases would move on such an accelerated time frame.

Taken together, these changes risk turning the asylum process into a sham. Rushed court proceedings, fees, and limits on work authorization would do nothing to fight supposed “fraud.” Instead, these changes would hurt the most vulnerable, those who are fleeing everything to seek protection in the U.S. Sin Barreras rejects these punitive proposals and calls on all Americans to lobby your Senators and Representative to object to them.