

STATEMENT — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Condemns the Trump Administration’s Actions Against Refugees and Migrants

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WASHINGTON, DC — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) strongly opposes the Trump Administration’s decision today to sign executive orders that direct federal resources towards building a barrier at the U.S. border and increasing the detention of migrants seeking entry into the United States—including refugees fleeing violence in Central America.

“At a time when so many people are fleeing unspeakable violence and persecution to seek refuge in the U.S., today’s decision is a drastic contradiction of what it means to be an American. As the world has its eyes on us, it is imperative that President Trump uphold the values that America has always lived by: compassion, empathy, family, human rights, and protection for those seeking a safe haven from danger and persecution,” said Linda Hartke, LIRS President and CEO.

“As Christians, we do not fear our new neighbors who have fled for their very lives – we embrace them. As people of faith, we are called to love and serve our neighbors – and as a result, our churches, our communities and our nation are stronger,” said Hartke.

At a time when the world is facing the largest global refugee crisis since World War II, LIRS remains committed to prioritizing and sustaining policies that support refugees and migrants. We view refugees as assets to our communities and recognize that their protection and resettlement is part of our obligation as a nation. LIRS will continue to work closely with its partners across the country to affirm our commitment to supporting their work in local communities, and with lawmakers to help prioritize and sustain policies that support refugees and migrants.

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Founded in 1939, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is the second largest refugee resettlement agency in the United States. It is nationally recognized for its leadership advocating with refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations. Through more than 75 years of service and advocacy, LIRS has helped over 500,000 migrants and refugees rebuild their lives in America.

STATEMENT — “For the sake of children and families” — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Strongly Opposes New DHS Immigration Enforcement Guidelines

February 21, 2017

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WASHINGTON, DC – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) strongly opposes the new guidelines announced Friday by the Department of Homeland Security to significantly expand and expedite enforcement and removal priorities for undocumented immigrants.

“These new guidelines are causing incredible fear among many vulnerable immigrants and puts them at tremendous risk,” says Linda Hartke, President and CEO. “As Americans and as people of faith, we should all be appalled at these actions. Of course we all want to keep our country and communities safe, but that is not achieved by demonizing some of our most vulnerable neighbors and tearing families apart. For the sake of children and families, the safety and protection of those who have been forced from their homelands in fear for their lives should be a priority as well as keeping families together.”

Allowing immigration officials to swiftly remove and deport people – including children and mothers and fathers who pose no risk to our communities – at their sole discretion, and without an immigration hearing, is contrary to the value we place as Americans on fairness and due process under the law. Expedited deportation will surely result in returning some immigrants back to the same dangerous circumstances from which they fled.

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