Public Libraries, Immigration, and Asylum Seekers:

Remembering the Most Vulnerable Amid Xenophobia and a Pandemic

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Abstract

Amid increasingly restrictive measures on asylum seekers and immigrants, contemporary public libraries and librarians have connected with and sought to support immigrants to the United States in diverse ways. This article chronicles the history of the profession's involvement in such efforts and advocates for such measures as both morally imperative and realizable.

Introduction: Meditations on Libraries, Asylum, and Bookplates

This article explores ways that public libraries and librarians have connected with people who have sought or are seeking asylum at the US-Mexico border. It shows how certain actions – supplying books to children, educating oneself and one's staff about legal rights, partnering with legal organizations to better disseminate information, considering shelters and detention facilities among one's patron base and reaching out to those patrons, understanding issues and legal needs in order to better evaluate sources – are not only the right thing to do, but also are forms of activism, especially in particular political climates, especially in environments that distort migration into a crime. Its central idea is that as librarians, engaging in our profession, we can effect change. Perhaps it is meant as a message of hope.

Certainly, it is meant to showcase the efforts of librarians and educators working along the border or as allies farther afield. From library tours in San Diego for young people staying in immigrant shelters to story times at tent encampments in Matamoros, meaningful and hopeful work has occurred. Public librarians and public libraries in places like Hartford, Connecticut and Addison, Illinois, have worked with local legal organizations to become partially accredited with the Board of Immigration Appeals, so that staff might provide direct legal assistance (e.g., form completion) to those accessing immigration benefits (Cohen, 2017; Department of Justice, 2020). The International Board on Books for Young People supported REFORMA's Children in Crisis Task Force through grants, and created a flyer to insert in donated books to inform recipients of public library systems and their services in the US (Sullivan, 2019). The books also feature bookplates to document ownership. A bookplate seems remarkably tiny when compared to the massive infrastructure of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHL). A bookplate, though, is a gesture of humanity and recognition of existence. A bookplate is a small personal thing; it affirms the validity of the person who owns the book.

But what does a bookplate mean when compared to nine Executive Orders and Proclamations signed in 2017 and 2018,[1] limiting asylum and immigration and rolled out with little or conflicting procedural guidance (Pierce et al., 2018)? What does it mean compared to a presidential determination allowing 18,000 refugees into the US in 2020 versus 207,116 refugee admissions in 1980 (Trump, 2019; Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020)? What does a bookplate mean compared to a proclamation broadly suspending immigration to the US, citing protection of US jobs during and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Trump, 2020)?[2] What does it mean compared to the expulsion of 10,000 migrants in early 2020 at the US-Mexico border in summary deportations that cite "emergency health measures" (Miroff, 2020a)? Compared to almost one million migrants turned away at the southern border in less than one year under the auspices of public health law Title 42 (USCBP, 2021)? Or forcible removals of over 10,000 Haitian asylum seekers from Del Rio, Texas, thousands of whom were returned to a country reeling in the wake of natural disasters and a presidential assassination?

A bookplate still means something; every action means

something and exists as part of a larger fabric of justice. That said, we need collectively to harness a million small actions, and we need to act urgently and with the collaborative ferocity and moral outrage shown in the wake of family separations to ensure that a public health crisis does not provide cover for the complete transformation and decimation of both asylum and immigration in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic not only has made potently visible longstanding systemic inequities in the US, it highlights systemic efforts to further marginalize immigrants and curtail immigration.

The Newest Wave of Anti-Immigrant Policies

"If one attitude can be said to characterize America's regard for immigration over the past two hundred years it is the belief that while immigration was unquestionably a wise and prescient thing in the case of one's parents or grandparents, it really ought to stop now" (Bryson, 1994, 145-146). Yet, in the context of such history, the Trump administration's attitude toward those seeking to become new Americans was notably virulent, being the core part of the former president's stated political philosophy from the beginning of his campaign. Unfortunately, despite the new Biden administration's pledges and rhetoric, it continues to enforce many of the restrictive immigration measures enacted during the previous administration.

According to *The New York Times*, the Trump administration's restrictions and proposed restrictions on immigration, supposedly in response to an unexpected public health emergency, were "repurposed from old draft executive orders and policy discussions" (Dickerson & Shear, 2020). The president issued five increasingly restrictive proclamations between January and May of 2020 that suspended types of immigration, citing COVID-19. Superficially, such actions seemed warranted in the midst of a global pandemic: restrictions on travel were taking place across the country and globe and were supported by public health officials. But when placed in the context of the administration's approach to immigration, they simply revealed an arc of border tightening, xenophobia, and restriction on legal and humanitarian concepts, often invoking Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 212(f) to exert such authority.

INA § 212(f) states that "[w]henever the President finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate" (8 USC § 1182). The Trump Administration was certainly not the first to use INA § 212(f) to restrict immigration; previous administrations used it to support sanction measures against, for example, North Korea, Venezuela, and Libya (Congressional Research Service, 2020). But executive orders issued on the basis of INA § 212(f) occurred during the Trump administration at a speed more than double that of the Obama administration and quadruple that of the George W. Bush administration (Congressional Research Service, 2020).

This has been accompanied by other measures and policies that cruelly devalue the humanity and existence of many immigrants. The first economic stimulus payments, as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act were not issued to workers without social security numbers, nor were they issued to the spouses of immigrants without social security numbers, even if they have individual taxpayer identification numbers (and pay taxes), nor were they issued for US citizen children of workers without social security numbers (CARES Act, 2020; Galvin et al., 2020). The second round of stimulus payments permitted payments to permanent residents and US citizens in families with mixed immigration status and the third permitted payments for US citizen children of workers with individual taxpayer identification numbers, but workers without social security numbers remained excluded (Lajka, 2021). Overcrowded migrant camps with little sanitation, in existence due to the Migrant Protection Protocols, are vulnerable to transmission of infectious diseases due to little sanitation, close living conditions, and minimal healthcare (Coronado, 2019; Department of Homeland Security, 2019). Detention facilities, typically run by private companies and often

lacking sanitary conditions, are perhaps even more vulnerable; the long-term increased criminalization of immigration has in effect created this precarious environment (Ewing et al., 2015).

According to a report from *ProPublica* in May 2020, Immigration and Customs Enforcement had tested only five percent of the detained population for COVID-19; of those, half had been found positive (Trevizo, 2020). By the end of May 2020, more than 900 detainees had been released voluntarily in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; that said, the number must be compared with the facts that immigrants held in detention centers reached an all-time high under the Trump administration (Aleaziz, 2019; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2020), that the number of immigrants in detention appears to be on an upward trend under the Biden administration (Narea, 2021; TRAC Immigration, 2021), and that the system of immigration detainment need not even exist. For much of the history of the United States, it has not (García Hernández, 2019).

The Art of Interdependence: Public Libraries as Institutions of Rights and Justice

But why are we writing specifically to librarians about this? And why now, when everyone and everything is anxious and uncertain, and many have lost jobs and loved ones, and one wouldn't be remiss to feel completely overwhelmed by information and reality? Because librarians are human, devoted to social welfare and justice, and devoted to the power of information. Librarians are creative enough to see power in a bookplate and connections between legal clinics and children's books. Librarians are called to community; and it might just be because it makes us feel better to think this, but we are positive that librarians consider the idea of community to cross the borders we humans feel compelled to erect. Thankfully, humans often *also* feel compelled to bound over those borders.

Though the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic may frighten us, we need to create public health measures that are ethical, comprehensive, and guided by science; we need to recognize how the contemporary arc of restrictive immigration measures makes the public health crisis worse (Parmet, 2020). Our policies should coincide with who we want to be as people in a community or society. As librarians, how can we use our commitment to community, shared space, shared resources, and accurate information to decrease prejudice and xenophobia, while also increasing people's connection to necessary legal, health, and employment resources in their communities?

The true genius of public libraries lies in their embrace of the art of interdependence – communities are strong and resilient when they are equitable and inclusive, with resources and help available, so that individual community members have opportunities to succeed and grow. Libraries are, in short, the most powerful engines of rights and justice in communities that ever have been created (Jaeger et al., 2015). Even members of the profession of librarianship are often unaware of the profound contributions that libraries historically have made in promoting and protecting inclusion and justice. Just skimming the highlights of what the field has done to promote inclusion and equity for a huge range of populations in the past century indicates the breadth of their contributions:

- Some libraries have been consistently providing materials in accessible formats to community members with print disabilities for more than 150 years. As a frame of reference, disabled people only received civil rights protections under the law in the 1970s.

- With the influx of immigrants to the US from all around Europe fleeing the tumults of the 1910s which grew into World War I, children's story time became a common feature of libraries as a way to simultaneously teach young newcomers English, while giving their parents a chance to learn as well.
- During the Great Depression, libraries lacked funding for new materials or infrastructure repairs, but provided reading materials and a safe space for millions and millions of unemployed persons. Many librarians even went without pay, but kept working to serve their communities.
- The creation of the Library Bill of Rights in the 1930s was the fuel librarians needed to combat

censorship of reading materials not only in libraries, but in their local and state levels as well. It also made a profound statement in the face of the widespread suppression of expression and destruction of reading materials by the National Socialist German Workers Party.

- During the Red Scare, libraries were often the only institutions in their communities to stand up to censorship efforts, which not only targeted pro-communist materials, but also was used as an excuse to target materials related to civil rights and human rights. Some librarians lost their jobs rather than censor library collections.
- In the era of Jim Crow, "freedom libraries" were established in many segregated communities, providing access to reading materials in places where local laws prevented non-white residents from entering the public library.
- At the height of the War on Terror, the field worked to educate the public about the threats to freedom of access and expression, even earning a rebuke from Attorney General John Ashcroft in 2003 for being too protective of the First Amendment.
- As the browseable Web became central to employment, education, governance, civic engagement, and so many other aspects of daily life, libraries were the only institution to ensure that access to computers and the Internet – and education for the necessary literacy and skills to make use of these technologies – would be available for people without other means of access.
- In our current age of misinformation, public libraries have crafted numerous online learning tools and lessons, as well as established many courses for patrons, to teach the information literacy skills that have become vital to survival.
- In response to the global pandemic, public libraries are planting gardens to grow produce for their communities, hosting farmer's markets, serving as food banks and distribution centers, and acting as COVID-19 testing sites, among much else to help community members survive the pandemic.

While not every institution in the field has been on the right side of history and the field as a whole has sometimes taken longer than it should have to evolve, overall, the modern history of public libraries and the work of our field can best be summarized as the protection of rights and the promotion of justice (Jaeger et al., 2015; Jaeger & Taylor, 2019). For public libraries, a large part of working to ensure fairness in their communities has been assisting the newest members of their communities.

The Legacy of Public Libraries, Immigration, and Asylum

Working to help immigrants has a long history in public libraries, especially in larger cities along the coasts. Immigration in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century represented a peak in the number of new immigrants in the history of the country, with the majority of the immigrants coming from parts of the world that were not previously heavily represented in the US population, especially the eastern and southern parts of Europe. While the majority of the country responded with a period of pervasive anti-immigration sentiment and the federal government created policies that blocked most immigration (Boorstin, 1989), public libraries were busily creating innovative new programs and resources for new community members (Burke, 2008; McDowell, 2011).

These activities included not only the advent of story times, but providing help with language, employment, social connections, and civic participation, as well as emphasizing the building of collections in areas of employment, education, economics, literature, arts, and politics that could help new Americans become enculturated and settled in their communities (Larson, 2001). In this same time frame, public libraries in large cities were also among the first public institutions to adopt new approaches and inventions to improve ventilation, sanitation, and lighting as they served ever larger numbers of patrons (Musman, 1993). By the end of World War I, services to immigrants were firmly established as one of the key functions of public libraries (Weigan, 1986). The development and expansion of children's services, adult services, reference, tutoring, creative arts programs, and practical skills programs for adults were all driven in no small part by the increasing commitment to serving new Americans (Davies, 1974; DuMont, 1977; Jones, 1999).

With the dawn of the browseable Web and the delivery of

government services online, many public libraries became immigration centers, helping new Americans with the online processes for applying for immigration, seeking asylum, and other related government services (Gorham et al., 2013). Amazingly, given what has happened with immigration during the Trump administration, many public libraries had previously developed partnerships with local, state, and federal government agencies to further assist new Americans (Gorham et al., 2013).

In 1977, the Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL) in New York launched the New Americans Project (NAP), which may be the most comprehensive and long-running program for new Americans. It includes English language instruction, coping skills programs, cultural arts courses, employment services, and collections in a wide range of languages, as well as a host of public and social services, citizenship materials, language resources, and other helpful materials on their website (Carnesi & Fiol, 2000). The library staff members speak a wide variety of languages, allowing the NAP to provide courses in a large number of languages (Winkel, 2007).

Two more recent examples of immigration centers have embraced the idea of not only helping newcomers become part of the community, but helping them become citizens as well. The Hartford Public Library in Connecticut launched The American Place (TAP) in 2000, with the goals of helping newcomers secure citizenship and achieve language and technological literacy (Naficy, 2009). TAP has created online self-study courses and guides to navigate the immigration process. Throughout its existence, TAP has formed innovative partnerships with the local school district, local non-profits, and even United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). It offers voter registration and passport services for new citizens, as well as hosting swearing in ceremonies for the new citizens. The Austin Public Library (APL) in Texas also launched in 2000, eventually opening New Immigrants Program (NIP) centers in all of the branches of their system (Miranda-Murillo, 2006). These centers offer computer and Internet skills courses, English classes, and English conversation groups. Courses are also offered in other locations in conjunction with partners in the Austin Community College and Austin Independent School District. Similar resources are available through their web presence.

A library need not be near a border or in a major port city to find innovative ways to serve newcomers in their communities. The information needs of immigrants and refugees occur in stages, which become more personalized as the newcomers become more settled in their communities: first, there are immediate survival information needs (food, clothing, shelter); second, there are sustained quality of life information needs (employment, education, healthcare); and third, there are the information needs related to building social connections and navigating institutional structures in their communities (Mwarigha, 2002). This later stage can include economic, political, cultural, social, and civic information, from banking to health insurance (Wang, Huang, Li, & Chen, 2020).

All of these are areas in which all libraries can help newcomers to their communities. Some libraries even take outreach programs and services – including technology services, English language learning resources, books in multiple languages, and resources necessary to acclimate to life in their new communities – directly into housing complexes and apartment buildings that are home to many immigrants and refugees in their service area (Jackson et al, 2019). A further major consideration for libraries in the US is the need to sustain a Spanish-language collection to provide physical, psychological, and metaphorical presence for established and immigrant members of the Latinx community, particularly in the wake of incendiary rhetoric and xenophobic policies (Alcalá, Colón-Aguirre, & Alaniz, 2018).

In the difficult past few years, libraries and educators around the US have found innovative ways to help immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in contrast to the harsh policy climate, in which even government programs meant to assist newcomers are not reaching many of them (Swenson, 2021). Melba Salazar Lucio, a professor at Texas Southmost College and leader with Team Brownsville coordinates escuelitas, comprised of weekly storytimes and interactive activities, and book

donations for children awaiting their families' asylum hearings in the encampment in Matamoros, Mexico. The encampment at Matamoros – and now, additionally, Reynosa – is a place where immigrants were forced to live in tents initially because the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) refused entry to the US for asylum seekers but insisted that asylum seekers be available for legal proceedings in the US (Team Brownsville, 2019; Department of Homeland Security, 2019).[3] Ady Huertas in the Logan Heights branch of San Diego Public Library leads regular library tours (four in the summer and two in the fall or winter) for children living in nearby shelters for immigrant youth (Yorio, 2018). The Brooklyn Public Library has educated its staff on policies and rights when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enter the building and offered weekly "know your rights" trainings to community members (Zulkey, 2020). Patrick Sullivan and Garza de Córtes lead REFORMA's Children in Crisis Task Force, which has connected with local legal aid organizations, shelters, and nonprofit groups to donate books to children seeking asylum and which regularly offers support to librarians around the country hoping to engage in such efforts (Sullivan, 2020).

This relationship between public libraries and newcomers is not isolated to the US. Across North America, Europe, and Australia, providing services to immigrants and asylum seekers is an established part of what a public library is and does (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Lerner, 2009; Varheim, 2010). These types of functions of public libraries are also developing in some African nations (Lawal, 2016). Immigrants, in turn, generally see the public library as a place to learn new languages and build new skills, expand social networks, meet people in their community, learn about social institutions, and stay connected to their native cultures (Varheim, 2010; Audonson, Essmat, & Aabo, 2011; Chu, 1999). Inclusive services for immigrant populations can also be found as a part of the curriculum of many library schools in the US and elsewhere (Jaeger, et al., 2011).

Conclusion: The Common Cause of a Truly Inclusive Society

While every public library is naturally focused on how best to serve its own community right now in the midst of a global pandemic, it is hard to imagine a more vulnerable population than asylum-seeking families with young children packed into cramped and disease-ravaged detention centers or crowded makeshift encampments. The curtailment to immigration and asylum is not just unnecessarily cruel, it is in direct conflict with the long-standing values and activities of public libraries. If we, as a community of public librarians, do not work collectively to support the needs of new Americans and those seeking to become new Americans in this climate of xenophobia, we will be failing to uphold our own ideals and our own historical legacy.

There are things that every public library can do to contribute. First, of course, is to consider your own community. Consider ways to improve and expand the services and outreach provided by your library to support newcomers in your local community and the partnerships you have with other local nonprofits and government agencies. Additionally, think about ways that you can educate your entire community about immigration. The United States is clearly in a period of deep xenophobia, but public libraries can serve as an educational counterweight to irrational anger. Special displays and programs that highlight prominent authors, who are first or second generation Americans, or that focus on materials related to the historical and current experiences of immigrants and asylum seekers, could help people to think about these issues in a new light.

There also is a national role for all public librarians, too. Every library can hold a book drive to collect materials for the programs that are providing books to those confined to detention centers. If you want to become more involved, learn more about programs like those of REFORMA's Children in Crisis Task Force or Team Brownsville and reach out to libraries at the forefront of helping those in detention centers to see what other help they need. Professional library organizations could help to coordinate efforts.

We can also engage these issues as national political issues, opposing them for their unfairness and

irrationality. Public libraries have a long history of political engagement, though we do not necessarily like to admit it to ourselves (Jaeger & Sarin, 2016a; Jaeger & Sarin, 2016b). Through opposition to censorship and book banning, standing up to the Red Scare and Jim Crow, subverting the intrusions on intellectual freedom of the USA PATRIOT Act, and quite a bit else, our field has demonstrated that a commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice defines public libraries and makes them such unique contributors to their communities.

Service to newcomers and helping them become part of their new communities has been an essential contribution of public libraries to these individuals and communities, but also to the nation as a whole. The United State truly is a nation of immigrants, and public libraries have been a long-standing, ever-reliable bridge into American life. Yet, the nature of the Trump administration's policies toward immigration and asylum sought to totally undo this fundamental aspect of the United States. As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump built his campaign around the denigration of women, the disabled, people of color, the poor, and immigrants, exploiting terminology of illness and disability to disparage these populations, most notably in the title of his campaign autobiography "Crippled America" (Cork, et al., 2016). Closing the border with Mexico as a way to limit immigration was a particular obsession; he even utilized the threat of disease as a reason in 2015: "Tremendous infectious disease is pouring across the border." And these disparagements were not a passing fancy of a candidate, as his annual proposed budgets aimed to eliminate funds that help these populations and his administration worked to create policies to suppress the participation of these populations – especially immigrants – in the 2020 Census (Douglass et al, 2017; Ndumu et al., in press).

Using the pandemic in part as cover, executive orders and proclamations have accomplished what building a border wall could not. Between closing the border on March 21, 2020 and May 14, 2020, the USCIS had turned away more than 20,000 people seeking asylum and interviewed only 59 of them (Miroff, 2020b). Of those 59 interviewed, 54 were rejected outright and only two allowed to stay while their cases were considered, deemed to possibly qualify for protection under the UN Convention Against Torture. No, you did not misread the preceding sentence – out of more than 20,000 people, two (or less than 0.0001%) had been given the chance to enter the asylum-seeking process.

Even newcomers who had successfully completed every step of the citizenship process were thwarted from officially becoming citizens in the initial months of the pandemic, as USCIS decided the entirely ceremonial ceremony to swear the oath of allegiance to the US must be completed for the process to be finalized even though the ceremonies initially were cancelled during the pandemic. In mid-May, 2020, this found about 126,000 should-be-citizens living in citizenship limbo (Rampall, 2020).

Donald Trump was not the first American politician to use the threat of disease to promote racist immigration policies, and the Biden administration's ready embrace of Title 42 to continue excluding Haitians is merely another step in a history of inequitable immigration policy (Carter, 2021). The immigration law designed to prevent immigration from China – and subtly named the Chinese Exclusion Act – was passed in 1882 and remained law until 1943, with the primary argument from politicians in favor of the law being that Chinese immigrants were a source of the plague and other epidemics (Lepore, 2018). And Donald Trump was not the only politician exploiting fear to promote xenophobia at the pandemic's onset, "with ugly incidents in Australia, China, and beyond" (Smith, 2020, p. E17). But just because it is happening elsewhere does not mean that we have to accept it as inevitable in the U.S.

Since the widespread development of programs for newcomers in the late 1800s, public libraries have been outspoken advocates – through our actions and programs – for rights and justice in the communities that we serve, both those that just came here and those from past generations. Our long-standing commitment to serve newcomers is directly in conflict with the idea of banning newcomers.

So what does a bookplate mean, compared to all this? A

bookplate means hope for a collaborative, well-informed, inclusive future that seeks equity and justice. A bookplate is a small meaningful reminder of people's desires for stories and connection, of their ability to use books as "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors," in the words of Rudine Sims Bishop (1990), "to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created." A bookplate signals human existence and is an invitation to take inspiration from the words, stories, and work of others and do as much as we as librarians possibly can, and even more, to create connections between people, to use all the resources available to us through our existence in institutions dedicated to shared space, resources, and valid information to act urgently – in times of crisis and times of relative calm – to ensure that people are valued and respected. Without acknowledgement of shared humanity, what and why are we?

Endnotes

[1] Exec. Order No.13767, 82 FR 8793, January 25, 2017. "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/30/2017-02095/border-security-and-immigration-enforcement improvements; Exec. Order No. 13768, 82 FR 8799, January 25, 2017. "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/30/2017-02102/enhancing-public-safety-in-the-interior-of-the-united-states; Exec. Order No 13769, 82 FR 8977, January 27, 2017. "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/02/01/2017-02281/protecting-the-nation-from-foreign-terrorist-entry-into-the-united-states and Exec. Order No. 13780, 82 FR13209, March 6, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/03/09/2017-04837/protecting-the-nation-from-foreign-terrorist-entry-into-the-united-states; Exec. Order No. 13788, 82 FR18837, April 21, 2017. "Buy American and Hire American." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/04/21/2017-08311/buy-american-and-hire-american; Exec. Order No. 13815, 82 FR 50055, October 24, 2017. "Resuming the United States Refugee Admissions Program with Enhanced Vetting Capabilities. Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/10/27/2017-23630/resuming-the-united-states-refugee-admissions-program-with-enhanced-vetting-capabilities; Exec. Order No.13841, 83 FR 29435, June 22, 2018. "Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/25/2018-13696/affording-congress-an-opportunity-to-address-family-separation; Pres. Proclamation 9645, 82 FR 45161, September 24, 2017. "Enhancing Vetting Capabilities and Processes for Detecting Attempted Entry into the United States by Terrorist or Other Public-Safety Threats." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/09/27/2017-20899/enhancing-vetting- capabilities-and-processes-for-detecting-attempted-entry-into-the-united-states-by and Pres. Proclamation 9723, 83 FR 15937, April 10, 2018. "Maintaining Enhanced Vetting Capabilities and Processes for Detecting Attempted Entry into the United States by Terrorists or Other Public-Safety Threats." Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/04/13/2018-07864/maintaining-enhanced-vetting-capabilities-and-processes-for-detecting-attempted-entry-into-the.

[2] At the time of this submission, the proclamation was not yet available in the online Federal Register. The citation refers to the online publication of presidential proclamations available through the White House.

[3] The MPP became moot due to restrictions imposed at the border under Title 42, which has turned hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers away. The Biden administration pledged to stop enforcing the MPP but was ordered by a lower court, whose order was upheld by the Supreme Court, to resume its enforcement. The administration recently announced its readiness to reinforce the measure, while stating a plan to end MPP when a court injunction is lifted. The slow pace of processing, the use of Title 42, and the resumption of MPP seem likely only to swell the numbers of people living in the encampments, and the work of Team Brownsville continues.

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