

Machar Immigration Statement
Adopted by Machar Board May 15, 2019

Introduction

Since 2017, state and federal law and immigration enforcement authorities in the United States have enforced immigration laws in ever-more arbitrary and capricious ways, putting the physical and emotional safety of our neighbors and their families at risk. To protect the integrity and safety of our communities and the fabric of our national society, to ensure immigrants—regardless of immigration status—are treated fairly, and to strengthen diversity and tolerance, Machar, the Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, through its board and members, is moved to advocate for and act in support of immigrants in our community. As indicated in the [Machar Statement on the Executive Order Limiting Immigration to the United States](#), we oppose any asylum or immigration policy or enforcement practice in the United States that discriminates on the basis of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, national origin or other characteristics protected by U.S. law.

Whereas . . .

- Local law enforcement officials in various parts of the United States have stepped up cooperation with federal immigration authorities;¹
- Federal authorities have increased arrests and detention of immigrants by more than 40 percent in each of the past two years;²
- A third of those arrests and detentions have involved immigrants with no criminal records;³
- Immigration judges are being asked to expedite deportation proceedings for detained immigrants;⁴
- Immigrants are not entitled to appointed counsel, and DHS officials have actively interfered with representation of counsel for detained immigrants who have obtained counsel on their own;⁵

¹ [American Immigration Council, "The 287\(g\) Program: An Overview," March 15, 2017](#)

² [Sarah Pierce, Jessica Bolter, and Andrew Selee, "U.S. Immigration Policy Under Trump: Deep Changes and Lasting Impacts," Migration Policy Institute, July 2018](#)

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ [White House, "Executive Order 13767 of January 25, 2017, Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements," Federal Register vol. 82, no 18, 8793-97.](#)

⁵ [Ingrid Eagly and Steven Shafer, "Access to Counsel in Immigration Court," An American Immigration Council Special Report, September 28, 2016.](#)

- Immigration detention facilities run by private prison companies are holding an increasing percentage of total immigrant detainees;⁶
- Immigration detention facilities run by private prison companies hold detainees on average longer than government-run facilities and receive more detainee grievances than government-run facilities;⁷
- Both government-run and private detention facilities often fail to ensure that detainees receive even basic levels of nutrition and health care;⁸
- Sexual abuse inflicted upon detainees has occurred at the hands of detention facility staff, and staff have failed to respond to sexual abuse inflicted upon detainees by one another;⁹
- An increasing number of immigrant detainees are children, and immigration authorities have failed to ensure that children separated from their families can later be reunited with them;¹⁰
- Federal authorities are willfully disregarding the letter of federal law with respect to asylum seekers;¹¹
- Due process protections are being eroded in deportation proceedings, in many ways intentionally;¹²
- Machar has previously committed itself to working in areas related to immigrant justice, including participation in projects organized by HIAS, providing direct assistance to refugee families, and joining the National Capital Synagogue Coalition for Refugees and Immigrants as a coalition member;
- We agree with principles expressed in the Society for Humanistic Judaism's August 2018 statement entitled "[Humanitarian Policies for Undocumented Immigrants](#)," which

⁶ [Emily Ryo and Ian Peacock, "The Landscape of Immigration Detention in the United States," An American Immigration Council Special Report, December 2018.](#)

⁷ [Emily Ryo and Ian Peacock, "The Landscape of Immigration Detention in the United States," An American Immigration Council Special Report, December 2018.](#)

⁸ [New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, "Detained and Denied: Healthcare Access in Immigration Detention," February 2017.](#)

⁹ ["While in ICE Custody, Thousands of Migrants Reported Sexual Abuse," PBS News Hour Weekend, July 22, 2018.](#)

¹⁰ [Emily Ryo and Ian Peacock, "The Landscape of Immigration Detention in the United States."](#)

¹¹ [Michael Tackett, Caitlin Dickerson and Azam Ahmed, "Migrants Seeking Asylum Must Wait in Mexico, Trump Administration Says," New York Times, December 20, 2018.](#)

¹² [American Immigration Lawyers Association, "New Barriers at the Border Impede Due Process and Access to Asylum," AILA Policy Brief, June 1, 2018.](#)

recognized and advocated for the need for fair treatment of immigrants based upon Humanistic principles and Jewish historical experience;¹³

Therefore, Machar, The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism, in recognition of the basic obligations of human decency and the Jewish people's history as strangers among the nations of the world, resolves to . . .

Support and endorse actions and policies that are humane and in the best interests of children and families, noting that:

- * the separation of children from their parents and families risks inflicting irreparable harm on these children and families; and
- * the separation of children from their families and individual immigrants from their families and communities risks inflicting irreparable harm on all people in society as it treats this separation as acceptable.

Support efforts to ensure due process in immigration proceedings;

Support legislation that attempts to address the problems described in this statement, including the enactment and expansion of "Trust Act" legislation to limit, within the bounds of federal law, the scope of local and state governments' cooperation with federal immigration enforcement officials;

Support actions and efforts to offer assistance, hospitality, and comfort to our neighbors at risk for deportation; and

Support and participate in actions and efforts to reduce the number of people in detention, to ensure humane treatment during detention, and to provide relief and support to people who are being held in immigration detention.

¹³ Machar does not agree with SHJ's suggestion of the use of ankle monitor as an alternative to detention.