

the **BULLETIN** 
powered by the Truman Project

Welcome to The Bulletin, the official monthly newsletter of Truman Center for National Policy and Truman National Security Project! In April, we hosted a book talk with Truman Daniel Drezner regarding his new book, "Toddler in Chief," Jon Margolick was announced as the new Executive Vice President at Truman and Truman Members started viral campaigns to help advocate for better senior care during the pandemic.

This month's Member Spotlight features Truman Security Fellow Eliane "Elle" Fersan!

How is Trump's xenophobia and rhetoric impacting immigrants during the pandemic?

It is important for Americans to understand that in times of pandemic our health depends, to a great degree, on how we treat the most vulnerable among us.

Trump's immigration policies are

fueled by racism and xenophobia, blaming immigrants for economic crises, disease, violence and other problems which are homegrown and products of our broken partisan political system and faulty economic policies.

Canceling DACA, and instituting policies like the Muslim travel ban, family separation, the public charge rule and other draconian policies have a chilling effect, severely impacting millions of tax-paying undocumented immigrants and mixed status families.

Furthermore, the pandemic has exposed our broken and unjust healthcare system as a liability. It is indeed a sickness-care system when healthcare is not available to everyone. For example, undocumented immigrants are not eligible to purchase insurance or receive subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Even legal permanent residents are not eligible for Medicaid for the first five years of their lawful status.

The chilling effect of policies like public charge, that target immigrants and seek to inhibit their quality of life in the United States, and the unjust healthcare system will hinder our ability to mitigate the pandemic.

If this pandemic teaches us anything, it's that inequity is a threat to our



society as a whole. Equitable systems are synonymous to our survival. It's in our country's best interest to have policies that protect the collective wellbeing of its residents.

We have a lot of work ahead of us to build a stronger society, beyond the pandemic recovery efforts.

On May 6, Truman is excited to partner with the USC Gould School of Law for a webinar with Judge Ashley Tabaddor (P.S. It's free! Register [here.](#)) What do you hope people take away from the webinar?

The American Bar Association recently described the U.S. immigration court system as "irredeemably dysfunctional and on the brink of collapse." In January 2020, the House Judiciary Committee held hearings on immigration courts, referring to them as "courts in crisis."

Our immigration court system is unfortunately weaponized as a political tool, particularly by this administration. The immigration court is overseen by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) which sits within the Department of Justice (DOJ), and is a law enforcement agency under the executive branch. It is inherently a conflict of interest to have a law enforcement agency oversee a court. It removes the possibility of impartiality and independence.

Such conflict of interest is underscored by decisions such as keeping the immigration courts open during the pandemic. It shows that this administration cares less about public health and more about it's politically driven law enforcement policies. The court is now at its weakest and no longer in any way resembles a traditional court.

Judge Tabaddor, in her capacity as president of the National Association of Immigration Judges, will discuss the association's advocacy for a proposed Article 1 Immigration Court, why this is so important for the image of the court, its integrity and the public trust in our justice system in general.

Concerning the plight of immigrants in this country, what positive developments are currently in motion and how can others, who are invested in this issue, help support those efforts?

While this administration has waged an unprecedented war of hate toward immigrants, the persistence and determination of advocacy groups led California to legislate AB540, the Sanctuary Law SB54 and expansion of Medicaid, while numerous local governments have expanded their services to

include immigrants. During this crisis, California is taking the lead on including undocumented immigrants in the state stimulus package and has shifted the narrative to talk about Californians regardless of their immigration status.

These achievements were not attained overnight, and certainly not out of California's abundance of generosity. They were earned through the sweat and blood of immigration rights activists and their allies.

Here are three things you can do:

This upcoming election is an opportunity for us to make a real change, not just by unseating Donald Trump, but by pushing for real and progressive change on immigration, healthcare, education, climate, criminal and economic justice. Short-term fixes pale in the face of the 21st century challenges of climate change. The first two decades of this century have been a glimpse of what lies ahead. We need to continue to push and advocate for comprehensive immigration reform for those who are already here as well as new immigrants, regardless of who occupies the White House.

In order to achieve a just immigration system, we need to support the campaign for the independence of immigration court. Follow the work of the National Association of Immigration Judges. Join immigration court observation programs across the nation and witness and report on the injustices rendered in our name.

Educate and learn about the injustices of our immigration system and its costs on people's lives (immigrants and U.S. citizens alike), the economy and our social fabric. Standing idle and inactive in the face of injustice is complicit, enabling and wrong.

Eliane "Elle" Fersan is the director of the Immigrants and Global Migration Initiative at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. She is the founder and CEO of Global Nexus Solutions LLC, a public affairs social impact enterprise focusing on local and international development. Fersan's advocacy work focuses on women, human rights and immigrant rights in the U.S., Lebanon, the Middle East and North Africa. Follow her on twitter [@ellefersan](#) .