News

Venezuelan migrants expelled from the U.S. under Title 42 walk across the Lerdo-Stanton Inte

Venezuelan migrants expelled from the U.S. under Title 42 walk across the Lerdo-Stanton International border bridge to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Oct. 14, 2022. (CNS photo/Jose Luis Gonzalez, Reuters)



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The Biden administration's Oct. 12 decision to apply Title 42 to Venezuelans at the U.S.-Mexico border "will have an immediate impact on our border community," said Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso.

Title 42 of the Public Health Safety Act was enforced under the Trump administration and has kept asylum-seekers from entering the U.S. because of health concerns caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the new rules, Venezuelans who cross the border illegally are being be deported to Mexico.

The Biden administration also announced a program to allow 24,000 Venezuelans into the U.S. if they have a financial sponsor and meet other eligibility criteria. The plan is similar to one the administration rolled out in April for accepting Ukrainian refugees.

"We are disappointed at the expansion of Title 42 to vulnerable Venezuelans," Seitz said in a statement.

"Now we must all work harder, especially the faith community, to build a culture of hospitality that respects the dignity of those who migrate, and to continue to press lawmakers and the Biden administration to establish a safe, humane, functioning and rights-respecting system to ensure protection to those in need," the bishop said.

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In his statement, Seitz and the Hope Border Institute announced over $100,000 will be provided to meet the emergency needs of migrants arriving to the Ciudad Juárez (Mexico)-El Paso border community. The financial support will help cover the costs of food, shelter and health care.

The funds are being made available through the Border Refugee Assistance Fund, a joint project of the bishop of El Paso and the Hope Border Institute to meet humanitarian needs of migrants at the border.

The Hope Border Institute also joined with Mexican branches of Jesuit Migrant Service and Jesuit Refugee Service in decrying the Biden administration policy on Venezuelans.

"We urge the governments of both countries to act immediately ensuring their protection," the groups said in an Oct. 13 statement, noting that about 330 Venezuelan migrants had just been deported to Mexico under Title 42.

The Trump administration first enforced Title 42 of the Public Health Safety Act during the pandemic. When he was running for president, then-candidate Joe Biden had denounced a policy he said it inflicted "cruelty and exclusion at every turn."