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H. R. 6537

To require the release of most aliens detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement during a national emergency related to a communicable disease.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 17, 2020

Ms. JAYAPAL (for herself, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE, Ms. OMAR, Mr. POCAN, Ms. PRESSLEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. RUSH, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. WELCH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To require the release of most aliens detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement during a national emergency related to a communicable disease.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Federal Immigrant Re-
5 lease for Safety and security Together Act” or the
6 “FIRST Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) COVERED HEALTH CONDITION.—The term
4 “covered health condition”, with respect to an indi-
5 vidual, means the individual—

6 (A) is pregnant;

7 (B) has chronic lung disease or asthma;

8 (C) has congestive heart failure, coronary
9 artery disease, or hypertension;

10 (D) has diabetes;

11 (E) has epilepsy;

12 (F) has a neurological condition that weak-
13 ens the ability to cough;

14 (G) has human immunodeficiency virus
15 (HIV);

16 (H) has chronic liver or kidney disease (in-
17 cluding hepatitis and dialysis patients);

18 (I) has blood disorders (including sickle
19 cell anemia);

20 (J) has inherited metabolic disorders;

21 (K) had a stroke;

22 (L) has a developmental delay;

23 (M) has cancer or has had cancer during
24 the last 12 months;

25 (N) has a weakened immune system; or

1 (O) has any other condition identified by
2 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
3 to increase the risk of serious illness from a
4 communicable disease.

5 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered
6 individual” means an individual who—

7 (A) is 50 years of age or older;

8 (B) is 21 years of age or younger; or

9 (C) has a covered health condition.

10 (3) ENFORCEMENT ACTION.—The term “en-
11 forcement action” means an apprehension or arrest
12 for the purpose of immigration enforcement.

13 (4) NATIONAL EMERGENCY RELATED TO A
14 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.—The term “national
15 emergency related to a communicable disease”
16 means—

17 (A) an emergency involving Federal pri-
18 mary responsibility determined to exist by the
19 President under section 501(b) of the Robert T.
20 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-
21 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)) with respect to a
22 communicable disease; or

23 (B) a national emergency declared by the
24 President under the National Emergency Act

1 (50 U.S.C. 1610 et seq.) with respect to a com-
2 municable disease.

3 (5) SENSITIVE LOCATION.—The term “sensitive
4 location” means all physical space located within
5 1,000 feet of—

6 (A) a medical treatment or health care fa-
7 cility, including a hospital, an office of a health
8 care practitioner, an accredited health clinic, an
9 alcohol or drug treatment center, an emergent
10 or urgent care facility, and a community health
11 center;

12 (B) a location at which emergency service
13 providers distribute food or provide shelter;

14 (C) an organization that provides—

15 (i) disaster or emergency social serv-
16 ices and assistance;

17 (ii) services for individuals experi-
18 encing homelessness, including food banks
19 and shelters; or

20 (iii) assistance for children, pregnant
21 women, victims of crime or abuse, or indi-
22 viduals with significant mental or physical
23 disabilities;

24 (D) a public assistance office, including
25 any Federal, State, or municipal location at

1 which individuals may apply for or receive un-
2 employment compensation or report violations
3 of labor and employment laws;

4 (E) a Federal, State, or local courthouse,
5 including the office of the legal counsel or rep-
6 resentative of an individual;

7 (F) a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis
8 center, supervised visitation center, family jus-
9 tice center, or victim services provider;

10 (G) an office of the Social Security Admin-
11 istration;

12 (H) a childcare facility or a school, includ-
13 ing a preschool, primary school, secondary
14 school, post-secondary school up to and includ-
15 ing a college or university, and any other insti-
16 tution of learning such as a vocational or trade
17 school;

18 (I) a church, synagogue, mosque, or any
19 other institution of worship, such as a building
20 rented for the purpose of a religious service;

21 (J) the site of a funeral, wedding, or any
22 other public religious ceremony;

23 (K) in the case of a jurisdiction in which
24 a shelter-in-place order is in effect during a
25 coronavirus public health emergency, any busi-

1 ness location considered to provide an essential
2 service, such as a pharmacy or a grocery store;
3 and

4 (L) any other location specified by the Sec-
5 retary of Homeland Security.

6 **SEC. 3. RELEASE OF CERTAIN COVERED INDIVIDUALS.**

7 (a) RELEASE.—During the period beginning on the
8 date on which a national emergency related to a commu-
9 nicable disease is declared, the Secretary of Homeland Se-
10 curity shall release from detention all covered individuals
11 who are in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs
12 Enforcement without requiring any covered individual to
13 post a bond.

14 (b) EXCEPTION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the
15 Secretary—

16 (1) may not release any individual determined,
17 by clear and convincing evidence, to be likely to pose
18 a specific and substantial risk of causing bodily in-
19 jury or using violent force against the person of an-
20 other;

21 (2) shall place, in the A-file of each individual
22 described in paragraph (1), documentation of the de-
23 termination described in such paragraph, including
24 the evidence used to make such determination;

1 (3) not later than 180 days after the date on
2 which the national emergency relating to a commu-
3 nicable disease expires, shall submit a report to Con-
4 gress that documents—

5 (A) the demographic data (including coun-
6 try of origin, race, gender, age, the status and
7 basis of removal proceedings, and criminal his-
8 tory) of the individuals denied release pursuant
9 to paragraph (1); and

10 (B) the justification for such denials; and

11 (4) may not use the results of any determina-
12 tion under paragraph (1) as evidence in any under-
13 lying immigration proceeding.

14 (c) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide notice to
15 nonprofit organizations providing services to immigrants
16 in the communities surrounding a detention facility if
17 more than 25 individuals are released from such facility
18 in a 24-hour period.

19 **SEC. 4. REVIEW OF IMMIGRATION FILES.**

20 (a) MANDATORY REVIEW.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
22 provision of law that mandates detention, the Sec-
23 retary of Homeland Security shall determine wheth-
24 er each individual in detention who is not a covered

1 individual will remain in detention for the duration
2 of a national emergency.

3 (2) PROCESS.—Not later than 7 days after the
4 declaration of a national emergency related to a
5 communicable disease, the Secretary shall establish
6 a process for reviewing the immigration files of all
7 individuals in detention who are not covered individ-
8 uals, and apply a presumption that aliens should be
9 released based upon the need to significantly reduce
10 the detention population due to the risk of spread of
11 a communicable disease in congregate setting.

12 (b) EXCEPTIONS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out subsection
14 (a), the Secretary—

15 (A) may only rebut the presumption of re-
16 lease based on a credible and individualized de-
17 termination by clear and convincing evidence
18 that—

19 (i) the use of alternatives to detention,
20 including release on recognizance or parole,
21 will not reasonably ensure the appearance
22 of the individual at removal proceedings; or

23 (ii) the individual is likely to pose a
24 specific and substantial risk of causing

1 bodily injury or using violent force against
2 the person of another;

3 (B) may not release an individual with a
4 final order of removal entered against him or
5 her, after all appeals have been exhausted if the
6 removal of such alien is reasonably foreseeable;
7 and

8 (C) may not use the results of any deter-
9 mination under this section as evidence in any
10 underlying immigration proceeding.

11 (2) PENDING CRIMINAL CHARGE OR PAST CON-
12 VICTIONS.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(A), the
13 Secretary may not justify the continued detention of
14 an individual solely based on the fact that the indi-
15 vidual—

16 (A) has a criminal charge pending against
17 him or her; or

18 (B) was convicted of a crime more than 5
19 years previously.

20 (3) REASONABLY FORESEEABLE DEFINED.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of para-
22 graph (1)(C), the removal of an alien is reason-
23 ably foreseeable if the Government—

24 (i) has already obtained travel docu-
25 ments for the alien; or

1 (ii) can demonstrate, by clear and
2 convincing evidence, that such travel docu-
3 ments will likely be obtained within 10
4 days.

5 (B) EXCEPTION.—For purposes of para-
6 graph (1)(C), the removal of an alien is not rea-
7 sonably foreseeable if such removal is not likely
8 during the period of the national emergency re-
9 lated to a communicable disease due to—

10 (i) the unavailability of transportation
11 options to the country of removal; or

12 (ii) the refusal of the country of re-
13 moval to accept the repatriation of the
14 alien during such period.

15 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the expi-
16 ration of the national emergency related to a commu-
17 nicable disease, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall
18 submit a report to Congress that documents—

19 (1) the demographic data, including country of
20 origin, race, gender, age, the status and basis of re-
21 moval proceedings, and criminal history, of the indi-
22 viduals denied release pursuant to subsection (a);
23 and

24 (2) the justification for such denials.

1 **SEC. 5. LIMITATION ON INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection
3 (c), beginning on the date on which a national emergency
4 related to a communicable disease is declared and ending
5 on the date that such national emergency expires, U.S.
6 Immigration and Customs Enforcement shall take meas-
7 ures to prevent the spread of the communicable viral dis-
8 ease by suspending—

9 (1) the requirement that individuals under su-
10 pervision or enrolled in Enforcement and Removal
11 Operations’ Intensive Supervision Appearance Pro-
12 gram report in-person;

13 (2) enforcement in sensitive locations without a
14 valid judicial warrant; and

15 (3) enforcement actions.

16 (b) SUSPENSION OF COLLATERAL ARRESTS.—Except
17 as provided in subsection (c), if an individual, who is only
18 in violation of civil immigration law, is encountered by
19 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the indi-
20 vidual may be issued charging documents, but may not
21 be taken into custody or placed in detention.

22 (c) EXCEPTION.—The suspensions under subsections
23 (a)(1), (a)(3), and (b) shall not apply to individuals who
24 are determined, by clear and convincing evidence, to be
25 likely to pose a specific and substantial risk of causing
26 bodily injury or using violent force against another person.

1 **SEC. 6. ACCESS TO TELEPHONIC AND VIDEO COMMUNICA-**
2 **TION AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS.**

3 During the period beginning on the date on which
4 a national emergency related to a communicable disease
5 is declared and ending on the date that is 60 days after
6 the expiration of such national emergency, the Secretary
7 shall ensure that—

8 (1) all persons in the custody of U.S. Immigra-
9 tion and Customs Enforcement—

10 (A) have access to telephonic or video com-
11 munication at no cost to the detained indi-
12 vidual;

13 (B) have access to free, unmonitored phone
14 calls, at any time, to contact attorneys or legal
15 service providers in a sufficiently private space
16 to protect confidentiality;

17 (C) are permitted to receive legal cor-
18 respondence by fax or email rather than postal
19 mail; and

20 (D) are provided sufficient soap, hand san-
21 itizer, and other hygiene products; and

22 (2) nonprofit organizations providing legal ori-
23 entation programming or know-your-rights program-
24 ming to immigrants are permitted broad and flexible
25 access—

1 (A) to provide group presentations by
2 video-conference; and

3 (B) to schedule and receive free calls or
4 televideo conferences from individuals in cus-
5 tody for individual orientations.

6 **SEC. 7. EXPIRATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY RELATED**
7 **TO A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who has been
9 granted release from immigration detention under this Act
10 may not be redetained solely as a result of the expiration
11 of the national emergency related to a communicable dis-
12 ease.

13 (b) GROUNDS FOR REDETENTION.—Upon the expira-
14 tion of the national emergency related to a communicable
15 disease, the Secretary of Homeland Security may not re-
16 detain a covered individual who was released from deten-
17 tion pursuant to section 3 unless the Secretary, in con-
18 sultation with the Director of U.S. Immigration and Cus-
19 toms Enforcement, determines, by clear and convincing
20 evidence, including credible and individualized informa-
21 tion, that—

22 (1) the use of alternatives to detention, includ-
23 ing release on recognizance or parole, will not rea-
24 sonably ensure the appearance of the covered indi-
25 vidual at removal proceedings; or

1 (2) the covered individual is a threat to another
2 person or the community.

3 (c) PENDING CRIMINAL CHARGE OR PAST CONVIC-
4 TIONS.—For purposes of subsection (b), the Secretary
5 may not justify the redetention of a covered individual
6 solely based on the fact that the individual—

7 (1) has a criminal charge pending against him
8 or her; or

9 (2) was convicted of a crime more than 5 years
10 previously.

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