October 6, 2022

Governor Chris Sununu
Office of the Governor
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Governor Sununu,

We are people of faith from a wide variety of Christian, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, and Quaker Congregations who are moved by the plight of immigrants in our country and at our borders. As such, we are horrified that you are supporting the deployment of NH National Guard troops to address, in your words, “the on-going humanitarian crisis along our southern border.”

1. **You are addressing the wrong humanitarian crisis.**
   There is indeed a humanitarian crisis at the border: Many ordinary, law-abiding people have been forced to flee their home countries due to shocking violence directed at them and their families, as well as the impact of climate change. After undertaking the arduous and dangerous trip to emigrate to the United States, risking their lives and their freedom, to then be detained and mistreated, is indeed a humanitarian crisis.

   However, the NH National Guard will not be aiding these desperate immigrants. Instead, they will be “enforcing border security,” helping the federal Border Patrol deny families their legal right to apply for asylum in the US. According to press reports, NH’s National Guard will perform surveillance at the border, adding state resources to the federal forces continuing to carry out our country’s inhumane immigration policies. This is the true humanitarian crisis that exists at the border. But more border militarization is not what is needed; instead, what is needed are resources which ensure protection of the rights of migrants to seek asylum in this country, resources which support the desperate human beings who look to the United States as a refuge from intolerable violence.

2. **Gov. Sununu, your rhetoric demonizes people who are exercising their legal right to seek asylum in this country.**
   Your press release said the NH Guard was being sent to the border in order “stem the flow of people and illicit drugs, weapons and money.” Surely your religious values recognizing that “people” are human beings, just like you, all of us created in the image of God. We humans are not meant to be assigned to the same category as “illicit drugs, weapons and money.”
3. Your actions will create a real crisis here in New Hampshire.
   Deploying New Hampshire National Guard soldiers —especially for a year -- will create a significant, negative impact on NH families, communities, and workplaces. The soldiers’ families will be without their parent, partner and wage earner. You have acknowledged the emotional stress, but none of us can understand what it means to each family. These soldiers are also leaving behind their jobs. What gaps will there be in schools, hospitals, community organizations, and businesses as these men and women are gone for a year, especially when so many businesses and organizations are understaffed? When the soldiers return to NH, will they still have jobs, homes, businesses?

4. Gov. Sununu: Human beings, here and at the southern border, deserve to be treated with dignity and should not be used for political gain.
   This deployment appears to be a political ploy to further demonize our immigrant siblings, and contribute to the trauma that they have already experienced, while ignoring the hardship this mobilization will cause for National Guard families here in New Hampshire. We are disappointed and dismayed by what appears to be an attempt to build political capital at the expense of human rights and well-being.
   We call upon you to be compassionate to the plight of those who seek refuge here in the United States. With the exception of Native Americans and descendants of enslaved Africans, we are all immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. We ask you to imagine yourself in their shoes, to be compassionate to their situation and needs, and to recognize the contributions they make to our communities, just as our ancestors contributed to their communities and helped improve the future, which we have inherited.

   We call upon you to protest rather than support this deployment and to demonstrate a commitment to the human rights and well-being of immigrants and all human beings.

Sincerely,

New Hampshire Council of Churches
American Friends Service Committee, NH Program
New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees
The Economic Justice Mission Group of the United Church of Christ
Jewish Progressive Action
The Granite State Organizing Project
Reverends Susan and John Gregory-Davis of the Meriden Congregational Church Meriden NH
Granite State Interfaith Action Fund