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Hawaii Attorney General Joins Multistate Amicus Brief Opposing the Removal of Protections for People Seeking Asylum

HONOLULU – Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined a coalition of 18 attorneys general, led by California and the District of Columbia, in an amicus brief supporting the plaintiffs in *U.T. v. Barr*, who are challenging the Trump Administration’s efforts to undermine asylum protections. Under an interim final rule, the Trump Administration is effectively ignoring asylum claims by sending people, many of whom are fleeing violence and persecution, to third countries that have signed asylum cooperative agreements with the federal government. In addition to harming asylum-seekers, the rule deprives states of the valuable economic contributions made by immigrants, including asylees and asylum-seekers, who join workforces across the country, start entrepreneurial ventures, and pay millions of dollars in taxes each year.

“The interim final rule not only violates federal law, it takes away important protections for people seeking help in the form of asylum,” said Attorney General Connors. “This new rule sends vulnerable individuals and families back to countries that lack the structural capacity and institutional systems to protect them.”

In the amicus brief filed with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the coalition highlights the irreparable harms the rule will have on states and asylum-seekers. In particular, the rule threatens the states’ economies, undermines state-funded legal service programs, and contravenes the states’ interests in keeping families together. Collectively, the coalition welcomes thousands of asylum-seekers each year and the rule directly threatens asylum-seekers by forcing them into dangerous circumstances in third countries that are not equipped to handle their claims. Guatemala, currently the only country where an asylum cooperative agreement is officially in effect, has insufficient staff to handle humanitarian claims. There are only 12 officials working on asylum cases in the entire country, and only three of them are tasked with interviewing applicants.

In submitting the amicus brief, Attorney General Connors joins the attorneys general of California, the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

A copy of the amicus brief is available [here](#).

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