

2024 Policy Platform

Tahirih’s policy work is rooted in our core values and in our specific theory of change. We work to advance policies and laws that enable immigrant survivors of gender-based violence to pursue legal immigration status, live in safety, and forge their own paths.

The Tahirih Justice Center is prioritizing the following policy goals to immediately improve protections for immigrant survivors while simultaneously seeking long-term, systemic change.

REFORM ASYLUM LAW TO NAME GENDER AS A PROTECTED GROUND

Right now, many survivors of gender-based violence are denied protection from persecution because the law does not clearly state that they qualify. We can change that by urging Congress and the Administration to name gender-based persecution as a reason for protection.

DEFEND AGAINST DETERRENCE-BASED IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Deterrence-based policies rarely achieve their stated goal and greatly increase the risk of gender-based violence. The U.S. government should abandon deterrence-based approaches and instead implement trauma-informed policies and practices.



DEFEND AGAINST STATE-BASED ANTI-IMMIGRANT POLICIES

There is a growing trend of state governments pursuing anti-immigrant policies and legislation that are often inconsistent with federal immigration law, perpetuate racial profiling in policing, and criminalize survivors and their families. Instead, states and cities should pursue policies and legislation to increase support and resources for immigrant survivors and the communities that welcome them.

IMPROVE U VISA ACCESSIBILITY

Survivors are experiencing egregious delays in the processing of their U visas, with more than 300,000 individuals in the backlog. These delays subject survivors and their families to additional risks of violence, exploitation, manipulation, and trauma. We must fund USCIS to address the backlog, recapture thousands of unused U visas from the early years of the program, and lift the arbitrary cap on the U visa program.

PREVENT DETENTION AND DEPORTATION OF SURVIVORS

No survivor should fear detention or deportation in seeking a pathway to safety and security for themselves and their families.



FUND USCIS TO ENSURE TIMELY EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR SURVIVORS

VAWA self-petitioners, U and T visa applicants, and asylum seekers must have timely access to employment authorization as this is critical to immigrant survivors’ ability to escape violence and provide for themselves and their families.



STRENGTHEN STATE LAWS ON THE AGE OF CONSENT TO MARRY & INCREASE PROTECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS THREATENED WITH FORCED MARRIAGE

Despite the known harms of child marriage, far less than half of all U.S. states set the minimum marriage age at 18 without exceptions. To better protect children, the legal age to marry should be set at 18 in all states, forcing or coercing a child into marriage should be defined as child abuse and neglect, and protection order statutes should clearly cover the types of harm and by whom that individuals at risk of forced marriage face.

PUSH BACK AGAINST DEHUMANIZING RHETORIC THAT THREATENS THE LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

Research has shown that dehumanization is connected to, and a precondition for, discrimination, oppression, violence, and, in extreme cases, murder or even genocide of an outgroup. Words matter; therefore, we denounce the use of dehumanizing and harmful rhetoric about immigrants.