

An Open Letter to Union Pacific: Stop Your Collaboration in the Unconstitutional and Racist “Operation Lone Star” Scheme

February 23, 2022

Lance Fritz
Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer
Union Pacific Corporation
1400 Douglas Street
Omaha, NE 68179

Via email

Dear Mr. Fritz,

As advocates committed to advancing and protecting the rights and dignity of all individuals, **we strongly call on Union Pacific to end its involvement in the racist and unconstitutional “Operation Lone Star” scheme.** Union Pacific’s history and continued success are deeply connected to the hard work of immigrants and people of color. Nearly 160 years ago, immigrants helped build the transcontinental railroad, connecting the Union Pacific and Central Pacific rail lines. Today, immigrants continue to help your company remain a thriving business. In light of the profound role immigrants and people of color have played in your company, it is alarming and disappointing Union Pacific continues to assist in “Operation Lone Star,” a scheme created by Gov. Greg Abbott to illegally criminalize migrants to prevent them from seeking safety in the U.S.

Under “Operation Lone Star,” approximately [2,500 migrants](#) and people of color have been apprehended, charged with “trespassing,” placed in state prisons, and deprived of due process, and many have been prevented from accessing their right to apply for asylum. Frustratingly, policies that stop migrants at U.S. bridges like “metering,” Title-42, and “Remain in Mexico” make seeking asylum in the U.S. nearly impossible and therefore force migrants to cross the U.S. border in between ports-of-entry. **Union Pacific employees have voluntarily assisted with the arrest of many of the individuals arrested under “Operation Lone Star” by submitting affidavits needed to bring trespassing charges against migrants.** These charges have failed to pass legal muster, as there is mounting evidence that many of the trespassing charges were fabricated. There are substantiated accounts of law enforcement officers directing migrants to enter private property and subsequently arresting the migrants for trespassing. Because these charges lacked the probable cause required under the law,

many of the trespassing cases against migrants have been dismissed, and a [TX District Judge has ruled “Operation Lone Star” unconstitutional](#). Despite these legal challenges, Union Pacific is even going further to unlawfully criminalize and punish migrants for seeking safety in the U.S. by supporting the filing of felony criminal charges against migrants apprehended on Union Pacific property.

As a result of the overwhelming evidence of constitutional and state violations, over [100 organizations](#), [members of the Texas Legislature](#), and [members of Congress](#) have repeatedly called for a federal investigation of “Operation Lone Star.” In addition to the considerable evidence of the operation’s illegality, there is also great concern about how **Gov. Abbott and other state leaders are using “Operation Lone Star” to fuel racist and anti-immigrant sentiment, that is harmful to all communities of color in Texas.** On several occasions, Texas leaders have used white supremacy rhetoric, and have seemingly welcomed vigilante and militia groups to target migrants.

“Operation Lone Star” is illegal, inhumane, and racist - it does not align with Union Pacific’s stated values. Your company has pledged its commitment to diversity and inclusion. As displayed on your company website, [“Union Pacific has an innate responsibility to speak out against all forms of discrimination \[...\]”](#) We support your company’s statement. However, words without action fail to protect our most vulnerable communities. **Union Pacific has an innate responsibility to not only speak out against the illegal and racist “Operation Lone Star” scheme but to also cease its cooperation in the operation. We are asking Union Pacific to:**

- 1) stop submitting affidavits that support the illegal arrest and apprehension of migrants;**
- 2) issue a public statement denouncing “Operation Lone Star” and white supremacy rhetoric that is harmful to all people of color; and**
- 3) find safe and humane alternatives to assist migrants apprehended on Union Pacific property and ensure these migrants have meaningful access to apply for asylum in the U.S.**

We hope your company will choose to stand in solidarity with migrants and people of color and take immediate action to protect their rights.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Texas
American Gateways
Black Butte Center for Railroad Culture
Border Network for Human Rights
Cabrera Legal
Central American Minors (CAM) Working Group
Centro Legal de la Raza
Children's Defense Fund-Texas
Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center (CREEC)
Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible
Detention Watch Network
Doctors for Camp Closure
Every Texan
Families For Freedom
FIEL Houston
Force for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (FIRE)
Garifuna Community Services
Georgia Latino Alliance For Human Rights
Grassroots Leadership
Greater Houston LULAC Council 4967
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
ICE Fuera de Austin
Immigrant Justice Network
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
International Rescue Committee - Dallas
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Jewish Family & Community Services - East Bay
Just Futures Law
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
La Raza Community Resource Center
Law Office of Baldo Garza PLLC
Lipan Apache Band of Texas
La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
Maryland Against ICE Detention
Mariposa Legal
Migrant Center for Human Rights
MTZ LAW GROUP PLLC
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Immigration Law Center

National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
O'Connor & Associates PLLC
Party for Socialism and Liberation - San Antonio
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Rapid Response Network of Kern County
Reformed Church of Highland Park Affordable Housing Corp
Restoring Justice
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Sanctuary DMV
Society of Native Nations
Still Waters Anti-trafficking Program
Takoma Park Mobilization, Equal Justice
Texas Advocates for Justice - Austin
Texas Center for Justice and Equity
Texas Civil Rights Project
Texas Harm Reduction Alliance
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Texas Representative Mary González (House District 75)
The Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas
Transformations CDC
United We Dream (UWD) Texas
University of San Francisco Immigration & Deportation Defense Clinic
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Woori Juntos
YMCA International