Immigration is dangerous for women. It places them in situations that makes them increasingly vulnerable to sexual violence, sexual harassment, rape, and abuse. It is estimated that 60-80% of women experience rape or sexual assault during the migration process (Fleury, 2016). The problem is so pervasive that some women even take contraception prior to migration to prevent pregnancy (ibid). Sexually transmitted infections are also a huge risk when rate of sexual abuse are so high.

These dangers remain present even after migration. Upon arrival to the United States, women are often denied healthcare, reproductive, and basic human rights. Many women in detention complain of a lack of hygiene including toothbrushes and menstrual products. Additionally, sexual abuse within detention centers is common. There were 1,224 complaints of sexual abuse between 2010 and 2017 alone and 59% of the time, detention officers were responsible (Ellmann, 2019).

**POLICY CHANGES:**
- Increase quality of care by enforcing the rules and regulations in place for treatment of prisoners.
- Roll back the Zero-tolerance Policy and expand asylum to include drug and gang violence.
- Reinstate DACA and extend it to cover people who have lived peacefully in the United States for longer than 10 years.

**IMPLICATIONS**
- Trump’s policies completely ignore people who are just coming here to create a better life for their family and contribute to American society in a positive way.

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**REFERENCES**

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**POLICY**

- **DIRECT APPROACH:** Trump’s policies are far more direct, from the Border Wall to expanding deportations by targeting undocumented people of any age. During the Obama administration, deportations mainly targeted individuals with criminal records.
- **DACA:** An Obama-era policy that allowed undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. before the age of 16, to have no criminal record, and are currently enrolled in school, to seek temporary legal status. This resulted in a huge spike in detention numbers and family separations. Unaccompanied minors hit a record 14,000 in 2018 and the number of unaccompanied children of any age in detention rose by over 14,000 from people 2016 to 2017 (Meissner & Gelalt, 2019).
- **IMMIGRATION COURT:** Due to the high volume of cases, immigration judges were ordered to move through the cases as fast as possible. Short-circuit processes were expected to rule on 700 cases per year when the average judge only gets through 495 per year (Lu & Watkins, 2019). Each case can take up to 3 years to complete and when witnesses and evidence is obvious, detention officers are often able to gain immunity, long wait times can prove fatal.
- **REDEFINING ASYLUM:** By removing gang and drug violence, which is pervasive in Latin America, from the means or resources to seek additional resources, I was only able to use stories that were publicly available. From these 7 cases, I drew 3 common themes that were mentioned in multiple cases. I had not picked these themes prior to my study but instead, I let them emerge as I read through the cases. This would give me the most accurate portrait of what life in detention is like for women.
- **MATERIALS & METHODS:**

  - Retained letters from Norma Elva Gutierrez and Nancy Meyer
  - Retained photos of Tania Romero and Norma Elva Gutierrez
  - Retained letters from Senora S. and Senora T.

**RESULTS**

- Nancy Meyer's daughter was arrested while driving home from Hobby Lobby with her kids and was detained for over 1 year in Louisiana. She was detained due to her non-violent offenses, and has only been released due to the release of other ICE inmates.
- Tania Romero left Honduras decades ago. The mother of four had been working in the U.S. for 10 years. She was held at West Country Detention Facility with 200 over other ICE inmates.
- Maria Ortiz Cortez suffered from severe anxiety and depression and received no help from health professionals. She tells the story of Senora S., a fellow detainee who, after multiple visits to the hospital for physical health issues and severe mental health issues, fainted and was taken to the hospital. She never returned.
- Norma Elva Gutierrez suffered 3 strokes while in detention. After the first, stroke she had a significant facial droop as well as immobility in her right side. Only when she was so weak she could not move did she receive medical attention. After the second, she was transferred to a hospital where she had two more strokes and remained immobile for almost a year. She was released and reunited with her children.
- One case complained of the spread of disease due to lack of proper medical care, quarantine, and space.
- One case discussed the lack of proper dietary care. Detainees were routinely fed expired foods, genetically modified foods, and dietary restrictions were denied.
- One case complained of poor water quality. Another complained of the lack of time for personal hygiene or recreational activities. Inmates are routinely denied free time and, instead, are “caged up with nothing to do” and sometimes don’t have access to fresh air for days on end.

**LONG TERM RESIDENCY IN THE U.S.**

- Tania Romero left Honduras decades ago. The mother of four had been working in the U.S. for decades, trying to provide a better life for her family and she has been diagnosed with stage IV cancer.
- Mayra Machado, a mother of 3, came to the United States when she was 5 years old. She does not remember crossing the border, all she remembers is an average American childhood. She was pulled over one day on the way home from shopping with her kids and detained because of an outstanding traffic ticket. Because she came here without proper documentation, she was ripped from her family and held in detention. She now faces deportation to El Salvador, a country she has no memory of.
- Her children blame themselves for her detention.
- She has a job she loved and two dogs. She was about to put a down payment on a house for her and her children.