



UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

PEOPLE OF FAITH & CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT DISCRIMINATION IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, MANASSAS AND MANASSAS PARK

WORDS OF COMPASSION: Supportive Statements on Immigration

**Compiled by Unity in the Community
Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park, VA**

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INTRODUCTION

Words of Compassion is a collection of statements and reflections from faith-based and community organizations on immigrants and immigration policy in the United States.

Few other issues are as complex or emotionally-laden as the question of how best to address our country's growing immigration population. Not only is immigration law complicated and ever-changing, but the causes and results of migration are far-reaching and involve many circumstances beyond our immediate control. And yet, it is an issue that must be grappled with for it goes to the very heart of our views of justice for all, our standard of living, and our ability to accept a changing world. In short, the migration of peoples around the world, and especially into the United States, touches every area of our lives.

With so much at stake, it is hardly surprising that many communities are finding themselves torn about how best to address the question of immigration enforcement, especially in the wake of the federal government's failure to adequately address immigration policy or to financially support state and local governments.

No matter your views about immigration, we are sure that you will find the words in this collection to be enlightening, uplifting, and thought-provoking; helping you to achieve new insights about yourself and your relationship within the human family.

Peace and blessings on your journey,

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For more information about Unity in the Community and its projects or to contact us with corrections, comments, suggestions, or to contribute additional position statements to this publication, please write to Unity in the Community, P.O. Box 4292, Manassas, VA 20108; or reach our contact person at: inaylor@unityitc.org. We welcome your feedback!

(Note: In the process of compiling this collection of statements, reflections, and documents, minor corrections and formatting changes were made to some documents. These editorial changes have not altered the meaning of the documents.)



NATIONAL RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

Board Statement on Legalization for Undocumented Immigrants in the U.S.

The American Friends Service Committee expresses its continued support for undocumented immigrants and affirms the basic principle that people who have established new lives in the United States should have access to procedures that permit them to adjust their immigration status. Specifically, AFSC calls on the United States government to grant permanent legal status to all undocumented men, women, and children who reside in the U.S. Furthermore, AFSC calls upon the United States government to implement immigration policies that will:

- respect human rights and international law;
- stop militarization of the border;
- remove the unequal treatment to which undocumented persons are subjected;
- provide nondiscriminatory application of immigration laws;
- support legalized entry to those under duress or fleeing natural disaster, regardless of national origins and political affiliation; and
- support those pursuing family re-unification.

Undocumented immigration represents a desperate response to desperate circumstances, including war, persecution, civil strife, and severe economic distress. Knowing the many types of violence and exclusion faced by undocumented immigrants, and recognizing that no legislative measure or enforcement tactic has ever stopped undocumented immigration, we have consistently pressed for the legalization of the largest possible number of undocumented immigrants and have worked to help undocumented people obtain legal status.

Undocumented immigrants work, pay taxes, and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of their communities in countless ways. A legalization¹ program would recognize the equity undocumented people have built up through their participation in U.S. society and acknowledge the inherent injustice of the secrecy, vulnerability, and exploitation imposed on undocumented women, men, and children.

In and of itself, legalization does not represent a comprehensive solution to the many problems faced by immigrants. Ultimately, it must be coupled with economic policies that encourage and fund sustainable development and permit working people to earn a living wage in their home countries - as well as an authentic commitment to demilitarization and the peaceful resolution of internal and international conflicts. Further, as part of the community of nations, the U.S. government must also heed calls by the UN and other intergovernmental bodies to ensure the uniform enforcement of human rights protections for all persons, regardless of their legal status.

AFSC is committed to the struggle for these changes. We pledge to join other organizations sharing this concern and calling for reform of U.S. immigration policies. We applaud the steps immigrant communities have taken to project their own voices into the policy arena and pledge to work alongside them to assure that their voices are strongly heard in the movement for a just immigration policy.

Approved by AFSC Board of Directors, June 23, 2001

¹ "Legalization" affirms that normalization of status is not a type of pardon, but a recognition of the requirements of justice in the face of a human reality. "Amnesty" suggests forgiveness for a misdeed.

American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

A Prayer Offered by AFSC Board Chair Paul Lacey at the Interfaith Service for Immigrants' Rights

Washington, D.C. - March 7, 2006

Eternal Parent, Mother of Wisdom, Father of Mercy, you have planted your light in every human soul. Through your prophets and teachers in every generation, you remind us that, as your children we are sisters and brothers of one another; and that your love for us gives us the power to make societies rooted in love, rooted in justice and wise care for all your children.

You have planted in us the longing to do justice and to be merciful, the capacity to feel and understand the lives of others.

You have given us the power to remember what our forefathers have told us of their hardships. Your scriptures remind us You know the heart of a stranger, seeing that you were also strangers.

You have given us the gift of moral imagination and the capacity to feel for the conditions of others and to act for their good.

God of justice and mercy, we come here today to witness for justice for the stranger, justice for the poor and disenfranchised, justice for those who come to this country willing to do our hardest jobs, our least-rewarded jobs, to feed their families and give their children hope for the future.

We come here to witness for their children, who need safety, security, the benefits of good education, the promise of a good life.

We come here to witness for laws that protect the strangers, that will give them equity in this society, laws that will make it possible not to be strangers any more.

Guide our actions and give us the words to speak to the hearts of our leaders in government, to reach the light in their consciences, so they will shape just laws.

Help us to be instruments of your justice.

Document Sources (April 2009):

www.afsc.org/ImmigrantsRights/ht/d/ContentDetails/i/2535

www.afsc.org/ImmigrantsRights/ht/d/ContentDetails/i/2810

Catholic Bishops

A Resolution by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

November 16, 2000

1. We, the bishops of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, at our annual meeting in Washington, D.C., call upon our federal policymakers to reexamine our immigration laws and enact legislative and administrative reforms which uphold the basic dignity and human rights of immigrants and preserve the unity of the immigrant family.

2. Immigrants from lands across the globe have helped build our great nation. Newcomers have contributed to our nation by strengthening our cultural and social fabric and adding their energies and ideas to our economy. Their presence has enriched our local communities, rural areas, and cities, and their faith in God has enlightened our increasingly secularized culture. In this Jubilee Year 2000 and throughout the new century, we recommit ourselves to celebrate and embrace newcomers and acknowledge the rich contributions they make to our nation.

3. The Catholic Church has historically held a strong interest in immigration and how public policy impacts immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. We believe that the current configuration of our immigration laws combined with immigration policies pursued by our government in the last several years have had the negative effects of undermining the human dignity of immigrants and dividing immigrant families. We urge our federal policymakers to revise our nation's immigration laws and policies in a manner which includes the following elements: legalization for the maximum number of persons in an undocumented or irregular legal status, particularly those who have lived here for several years and built equities in and otherwise contributed to their communities; enforcement policies, most particularly along the United States-Mexico border, which respect the human dignity and human rights of all immigrants, regardless of their legal status; revision of the 1996 immigration laws, which undermine the procedural due process rights of immigrants in our country, omit protections for asylum seekers, and are retroactive in nature; revision of the 1996 welfare law, which severely restricts the eligibility of legal immigrants for public benefits; repeal of mandatory detention of immigrants and development of alternatives to detention, especially for women and children, as well as the release of immigrants who have completed their sentences but are indefinitely detained because their country of origin will not accept their return; enforcement of and respect for the civil and workplace rights of immigrant workers, especially those in industries which rely heavily on foreign workers (i.e., agriculture, meat and poultry processing, service); a more efficient legal immigration system with reduced waiting times which is equitable, generous, and based upon family reunification; U.S. foreign and economic policies which fully address the conflict, poverty, and denial of human rights which pressure persons to come to this country; and a religious worker visa program which is permanently authorized and which more efficiently permits foreign religious workers into our country to perform pastoral work on behalf of the Catholic Church in the United States and all other U.S. religious denominations.

4. While we recognize the right and acknowledge the responsibility of the U.S. government to secure our national borders and do not condone or encourage undocumented migration into the United States, we nevertheless affirm the dignity of undocumented persons who live in our midst and make every effort to ensure that their human rights are respected and protected. Until such time as the global community effectively addresses the root causes of undocumented migration, individual nations must confront the presence of undocumented persons in a manner which upholds their basic dignity and human rights.

5. At the advent of a new Congress and new Administration, now is a good time to reevaluate our nation's immigration laws and policies. The American people must consider how to embrace the contributions of immigrants and, in the process, better our communities and nation. Our elected leaders must build an immigration system which acknowledges the increasing interdependence of our world and accounts for the migration streams which characterize the new globalization.

6. We, the U.S. Catholic bishops, stand ready to work with our public officials to fashion a new immigration model which prepares our nation for the 21st century while also upholding and respecting the human rights and dignity of immigrants and their families. We do so as pastors devoted to providing the full range of pastoral, legal, and social services to newcomers to our land. We offer, in particular, the experience of our nationwide refugee resettlement and legal immigration networks as a source of information on the needs and aspirations of newcomers in our country and on the reforms that are necessary in our nation's laws and policies.

7. At the threshold of a new millennium, our nation must revisit its historic roots and reexamine attitudes, laws, and policies toward newcomers who come to our land in search of a better life. We call upon all Catholics and citizens of good will to heed our Lord's call and challenge: "*For I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*" (Matthew 25:35)

Document Source (Winter 2008):
www.usccb.org/mrs/reform.shtml

Church of the Brethren

General Board Pastoral Letter on the Current Immigration Issues

General Board, October 2006

Strong feelings surround the subject of immigration. Many find it difficult to deal with immigration issues. How are we to relate with people in our midst from other nations? We sense God's call to hear and obey what God's Word says to us on these matters.

The Hebrew Scriptures declare that all peoples will ultimately be invited into God's household together. Micah, for instance, declares: *"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, ... and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come"* (Micah 4:1-2). Zephaniah speaks God's promise to overcome human divisions: *"At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord"* (Zephaniah 3). Even enemy nations will have their place in God's plan, as the prophet Jonah discovers regarding Nineveh.

God's call to live together well is not just for the future, however. God's Word gives practical advice for sharing life with people of differing national identities right now. The Holiness Code contained in the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus forbids idol worship, demands justice in the courts, and lays down the second great commandment quoted by Jesus in the New Testament, *"you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."* (Leviticus 19:18). It also contains this more specific commandment regarding our relationships with neighbors from other nations in our midst:

"When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.
"(Leviticus 19:33-34)

The purpose of these verses is to call God's people to holy living, to a life of love vastly different from the fearful living of the culture around us. The text does not say that we are to "tolerate" the aliens in our midst. Rather it clearly states that we are to "love" those persons. Indeed, Leviticus 19:10 makes clear, we are to make sure they have food to feed their families, allowing them to glean after the harvest. Caring for the strangers living among us is part of the holiness God requires.

Obedience to God's Word calls us to honor and respect the poor and the foreigners, people who are least able to care for themselves. Aliens often have no legal recourse when they are cheated. There may not be any system of justice available to them. If they have a dispute with an employer or landlord, who stands up for them? In Leviticus 19, God reminds the people of Israel that they themselves have been in a similar situation when they were aliens in Egypt. We Americans have a similar history, for we are a nation of immigrants. Our ancestors were strangers in a strange land; they simply arrived in this country at a time when laws had not yet been written that would categorize them as illegal. Just as God called the Israelites to deal justly with the foreigners who lived among them, so God continues to call us as Americans to let the foreign-born among us be like the native-born to us, human beings created by God and placed into our world as neighbors whom we are to love and care for in the same way that we love and care for ourselves.

This teaching of Leviticus 19 is not isolated. There are direct parallels (Exodus 22:21-24, Deuteronomy 24:17-19, Ezekiel 47:22-23) as well as narrative examples with individuals such as Ruth, Rahab, and Tamar (each integral to the ancestry of King David and Jesus) contending against ethnic prejudice to become part of God's people. In the New Testament, Jesus reminds us that whatever we do to help strangers feel at home among us or to keep strangers away from ourselves, we have done to Christ (Matthew 25:31-46). Hebrews 13:2 admonishes us to willingly host strangers, for we might discover that they are God's messengers to us (angels).

In all of these teachings from the Scriptures, we hear God's call to welcome and love the aliens and strangers among us. In the midst of debating economic and political issues, we who follow Jesus are called to speak out on behalf of those who live, work, worship, and reside among us without legal protections. More than that, we are to love them. We are to help make sure that they are able to feed their families. When they are threatened, forced to relocate, or living in fear, we are called to stand with them and advocate for them. Our feelings and our actions matter greatly — both to them and to God.

Let us help all of our neighbors discover that those who are labeled as “aliens” or “illegal” or “undocumented” are nevertheless people created by God, people for whom Christ died, people who matter. They laugh like all of us; they cry like all of us; they bleed like all of us; they dream like all of us. Jesus cares about them all. Jesus reached out beyond his own race, beyond his own faith, to those considered to be of less stature. He cared for the poor; he reached out to the rich; he cared for the dominating Roman soldier as well as the dominated peasant. He preached justice and mercy, and he cited the requirement of God that we love all our neighbors.

Loving all our neighbors calls us also to pray for and care for those who are afraid of the strangers who live among us. We have a Gospel to proclaim — the Good News of Jesus, which brings alienated persons together through forgiveness and grace. As the Apostle Paul proclaims:

“In Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.”
(Ephesians 2:13-16)

The Lord our God is not a little god who cares only for one group or nation. The Lord God is Creator and Redeemer of all peoples, of every nation. And we invite everyone — foreigners and fearful and bystanders alike — to follow Jesus Christ, preparing to become part of *“the great multitude that no one [can] count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ..., [who] will guide them to springs of the water of life”* (Revelation 7:9 & 17).

The General Board encourages the members of the Church of the Brethren to talk about immigration issues — openly and calmly, and to do our very best to live out the admonitions of the Scriptures. The 1982 “Annual Conference Statement Addressing the Concern of Undocumented Persons and Refugees in the United States” continues to give us very helpful guidance (http://www.cobannualconference.org/ac_statements/82Refugees.htm).

Let us avoid harsh and hurtful words. Let us work for liberty and justice for all who live among us, loving all our neighbors, including the foreigners in our midst. “*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God*” (Romans 15:7). [Statement, 1982 Annual Conference]

Document Sources (Winter 2008):

www.brethren.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=7502

www.brethren.org/genbd/clm/clt/index.html

Church of the Brethren

Statement Addressing the Concern of Undocumented Persons and Refugees in the United States

Introduction

The United States often has been described as a "Nation of Immigrants." Except for Native Americans and persons brought here against their will, the country has been populated by those who left their homelands for social, political, religious, or economic reasons. Even so, the U.S. has a history of ambivalence toward immigrants and refugees. In times of prosperity we offer hospitality; in times of recession or depression we react with hostility. It is especially felt by those citizens who are unemployed that too many immigrants have already come. The tension between these two groups of people can be resolved in the context of the stewardship of God's gifts, the knowledge that all resources come from God and are not the unqualified property of those holding them, and the recognition that all possessions are held in trust for the benefit of all humanity.

Historical Background

For the first hundred years of our history anyone could come to this country to stay; immigration was unrestricted. In 1852 the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo changed the immigration status of those who inhabited the Southwest. A border was created that divided families, beginning an ambivalent policy toward Immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries. A period of restrictive Immigration thus began that lasted until 1920. Other restrictions were placed on Catholics, Chinese, Koreans and ultimately in 1917 upon all Asians.

From 1921 to 1964, numerical restrictions on immigrants were developed. The first specific limitation by country was imposed in 1921, holding the annual immigration to three percent of the foreign born persons of a given nationality who resided in the United States according to the 1910 population census. This quota effectively excluded not only Asians but also Africans and persons from other countries and continents.

The basic law governing current U.S. Immigration policy is the Immigration Nationality Act of 1952. Focused on a fear of communism, the Act set forth many repressive restrictions. From 1965 to 1980, minor revisions of immigration law were adopted. In an attempt to reduce discrimination, Congress substituted a limit of 20,000 immigrants per country for the National Origins System. The most recent reform effort, the Refugee Act of 1980, has produced mixed results in which refugees from Indochina are resettled under government plans while others seeking refugee status from Haiti and El Salvador are turned away. Further, many people wait in long backlogs to rejoin their families while others with no relatives in this country enter immediately.

Inability to enforce the existing law has led to a large population of undocumented persons, that is, those who enter the U.S. illegally or have overstayed their visas. Lacking legal status and fearing deportation, these persons have become easy prey for those who want cheap labor or who offer unsafe working conditions. The outcry of the exploited and unemployed is increasing.

In light of these developments, matters of justice become a pressing concern in regard to U.S. immigration-refugees policy. It is clear that intercultural tensions, foreign policy, human rights, and

the domestic economy all converge in immigration and refugee policy. A Christian response to these concerns becomes ever more urgent.

Theologies and Biblical Understandings

Through the media we see both generous and selfish concerns in the proposals advanced. In the midst of this Babel of fear, misunderstanding, generosity, and pride, we believe that the Gospel speaks a clear word of God's love for all people. We seek to be faithful to the Word and call upon members of the Church of the Brethren to respond as it has done in the past to serve the spiritual and social needs of migrating, immigrating and refugee persons.

The concepts of stranger, alien, and sojourner furnish useful metaphors for interpreting the biblical and theological heritage of our church and God's actions in human history. In the biblical tradition the alien is under the special protection of God. The alien is among those who receive the special protection because they do not have land. This means that the alien is to be dealt with in the same manner as the native. This is true of religious rights and of civil rights. Furthermore, that which is set aside for the alien, the widow, and the orphan (such as the gleanings of the crops) is not an act of charity but an obligation on the part of Israel, who, in truth, is an alien in God's land.

The situation of the alien is described in the Old Testament in Genesis 15:13; in God's promise to Abram. Here we see immigration from Canaan to Egypt because of hunger. Moses's story is a political kind of immigration. Moses was an alien in the land of Midian. That is the reason he called his son Gershom because "I have been an alien in a foreign land" (Exodus 2:22 RSV). And after the account of Moses leading the Israelites from Egypt, there is the command again and again to be good to the alien, sojourner, immigrant, or refugee in your midst, "for remember that we were sojourners, aliens in the land of Egypt." (See Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:13-34; Deuteronomy 10:11; 1:16; 24:14; 24:17; 27:19)

In the New Testament, the protection for the immigrant-refugee is very real, especially in the book of Hebrews. A great cloud of witnesses is offered as the image and shape of the pilgrim community of God - strangers, sojourners and exiles always on the move (Hebrews 11). The epistle concludes on a note familiar to the Gospels. The lasting city is to be found where Jesus suffered, died and redeemed the world (Hebrews 13:7-16). It is Hebrews also which provides the best text of hospitality: "Continue to love each other like brothers and sisters, and remember always to welcome strangers. For by so doing, some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2). In the parable of the Good Samaritan we are told to love our neighbor as we love ourselves and, by extension, to care for others in every way. God's actions culminate when all of God's people are "reconciled one to another, no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and workers of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

The primary truth of faith as we consider immigrants and refugees today is that Christ has made another appearance among us, as Himself an immigrant and refugee in the person of political dissidents, the economically deprived, and foreigners on the run. We are to join them as pilgrims in search of that city yet to come, with foundations of love and justice whose architect and builder is God.

Public Policy Concern

In formulating an immigration policy, the American people are confronted with the profound plight of other peoples. Political and economic realities offer no ready or simple solutions. Proposals for immigration law reform pose fundamental conflicts between the ideal and the practical. Nonetheless, out of obedience to our heritage and the Gospel mandate, the Church of the Brethren affirms legislation and public policies which welcome and promote the welfare of immigrants and refugees.

Therefore, we call upon the United States government:

- To encourage and support non-violent movements for human rights in all nations, thus reducing the pressure on persons to migrate.
- To lead in promoting the economic well-being of other nations, the protection of human rights, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We are grateful for past achievements in these fields, hope for further success, and state our conviction that the sacrifice of some of our own wealth and prestige is a worthwhile investment to achieve these ends.
- To promote international understanding through a policy of freedom of travel, freedom of press, and freedom of residency. We hope that, through understanding the people of the world as real persons, we become strongly committed to the peace which God commands.
- To support and harbor refugees from war, oppression, famine, and natural disasters. We favor federal government support and coordination of resettlement programs and cooperation with voluntary agencies to assure orderly, successful resettlement. We also favor generous temporary care for refugees who, upon fleeing their homeland, find their first asylum in the United States. We welcome refugees on their own merits without regard to the politics of the government from which they are fleeing. We take into account the right of free choice of those being resettled. To reorganize the Immigration and Naturalization Service to efficiently process immigrants' claims for status by standards of fair procedure, to adequately fund the agency to assure its proper operation, and to seek staff who will be sensitive to cultural differences of immigrants in special situations of need. There should be procedures for waiver of requirements where that would provide a more just solution.
- To make provisions for admissions beyond the annual ceiling and to review the numerical limits periodically, taking into account economic, social, political, ecological, agricultural and demographic national and global conditions.
- To bring about a general amnesty for those people who once entered the United States as "undocumented aliens" but have settled peacefully among their neighbors. These persons should be given legal status as quickly and simply as possible to assure that they will not be further exploited.
- For a more careful enforcement of immigrant law, particularly against those who seek to benefit from exploitation of "undocumented aliens." We oppose any enforcement method likely to increase discrimination against undocumented people because of ethnic or racial characteristics, such as identification cards or other documents as a prerequisite to employment. We express hope that obedience to the law can be secure without unnecessary losses of freedom from government supervision. We believe that government policies, such as we have outlined, will help to secure justice for citizens and immigrants to the United States.

- To make itself an example of freedom, justice and compassion. In seeking to achieve these goals the governments should accord immigrants and refugees proper legislation to assure full and equal protection of their human rights, such as labor rights of collective bargaining, occupational safety and health, wage and pension protection. We oppose the use of immigration policy to discriminate against others for political, religious, racial or social reasons. We believe that the United States should have a commitment to work for the establishment of just and equitable relationships among all nations which would contribute to the well-being of all peoples and hence to the elimination of one of the possible causes of involuntary immigration.

Response of Church of the Brethren Members

We recognize that God's call goes beyond mere justice secured by the government, and our traditional role as a Church of the Brethren has been to promote a neighborly spirit in the community both individually and through our congregations.

We need to affirm that everything belongs to God and that we are part of an immigrant people who are looking for better land. Our brother and sister immigrants are reminders of who we are and whom we serve. The refugees and immigrants bring needs with them but they also bring considerable skills, rich cultures, and great spirits which can enrich us all. We look forward to a time when all people will be free to move from one nation to another and to choose their homeland without restriction. If that seems impossible to us now, it is only because sinful greed and fear still divide the nations East and West, North and South, poor and rich, crowded and spacious. We believe that responsiveness to the needs of immigrants and refugees embraces both our personal and corporate lives.

Therefore, we call on members of the Church of the Brethren:

- To consider our biblical responsibility and confront our sinful greed and fear.
- To witness and work in public policy and to service ministries of the church, and in their personal lives, for the welfare of God's people on the move.
- To continue its historical role as a leader in resettlement of refugees and immigrants and to continue to assist in temporary care of refugees.
- To continue to raise our consciousness and that of society regarding the needs of immigrants and refugees.
- To build international and intercultural understanding through learning with and about immigrants and refugees and their homelands; to encourage newspapers, television and other media to promote understanding between communities and new arrivals; to practice ourselves and encourage others to practice a policy of creating economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees; to be peacemakers wherever tensions are present between groups threatened by violence.

The biblical tradition regarding the alien guides our response as Church of the Brethren people when we deal with the aliens in our land. We believe that we can continue to act according to our expressions of faith and mutuality with other faith traditions, and be willing to share our expressions and experiences of the Christian faith without self-righteousness. We live with the hope that we will some day have a community of justice, peace and love.

This hope gives us the courage to be faithful to the One who calls us to live out that hope through love for our neighbors and our enemies. We pray for God's help as we seek to do justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God among peoples of all nations.

Action of the General Board July 1982: The General Board adopted the Statement and recommended that it be passed to the 1982 Annual Conference through Standing Committee.

Curtis W. Dubble, Chair

Robert W. Neff, General Secretary

GLOSSARY

ALIEN: A person who is not a citizen of the United States.

AMNESTY: Granting of permission to reside in the United States to people who once entered illegally or overstayed a temporary visa. Also called "LEGALIZATION."

ASYLEE: An individual person who has been granted ASYLUM.

ASYLUM: The granting of permission to reside in the U.S. to a person fleeing persecution in another country. Under current U.S. law, to receive asylum a person must be entitled to REFUGEE status.

FIRST ASYLUM: The country where refugees first arrive after escaping countries where they were persecuted. They may then be resettled in other countries or in that country.

IMMIGRANT: Under U.S. law, one who has been granted permission to enter and establish residence in the U.S. Only those who fit one of the PREFERENCES, or are exempted- from requiring a quota number, may become immigrants. Generally, immigrants are those who leave their home country voluntarily, as opposed to REFUGEES who are forced to leave their home land

PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIEN: A person who has been granted permission to live in the U.S., but who is not yet a citizen.

REFUGEE: Under U.S. law, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of nationality on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Under the Refugee Act of 1980, persons whose asylum claim is approved can, after a year, apply for residence.

UNDOCUMENTED PERSON: Any are required to prove status, this may include those who are legally entitled to residence, but have lost their papers.

Action of 1982 Annual Conference: Rene A. Calderon, Hispanic Ministries representative, and Ralph Watkins, Washington office legislative associate, introduced the paper from the General Board.

(This Statement is a response to a concern addressed to the General Board by the San Diego Church of the Brethren, dated June 1, 1980.)

Document Source (Winter 2008):

www.cobannualconference.org/ac_statements/82Refugees.htm

Church World Service (CWS)

Statement On Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Joseph Roberson, Director, CWS Director, Immigration and Refugee Program

January, 25, 2007

With the commencement of the 110th congress, Church World Service urges the House and Senate to legislate a comprehensive solution to America's broken immigration system. As a faith-based, humanitarian organization concerned with the equitable treatment of all human beings, we know that reform can maintain national security while preserving our country's legacies of welcoming the stranger and treating all people with dignity and respect. We continue to call for reform that will:

- **Improve our family-based immigration system** to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited.
- **Create legal avenues for immigrants to safely and legally work** in the United States, with their employee rights fully protected. Reforms should increase the accessibility of legal ports of entry and repair the administrative backlog of immigration applications that prevents people who want to enter the country legally from doing so in a realistic timeframe. With these mechanisms in place, the border patrol would be able to focus solely on threats to national security.
- **Provide an opportunity for earned legalization** for all persons who already contribute to our economy through social security, sales tax and other mechanisms and dedicate themselves to learning English, working and paying taxes. We do not support blanket amnesty, but instead call for earned legalization as a necessary way to keep families together, remedy the abuse of undocumented workers and enhance governmental awareness of those living in this country.
- **Implement smart, targeted enforcement, not fences.** Our national security should be enhanced through workplace enforcement, more accessible legal ports of entry and earned legalization, rather than policies that have failed in the past such as fences and the militarization of the border. Legislators should also recognize that some employers encourage illegal immigration in order to abuse undocumented employees. Reforms should enable employers to verify applicants' immigration status and hold them accountable for hiring undocumented workers.
- **Mandate that domestic law enforcement agencies ensure the safety of all persons**, rather than attempt to serve as immigration enforcement, which hinders justice for immigrants and citizens alike and can result in criminals targeting immigrants who will not report crimes due to fear of deportation. Also, reforms should protect and not punish individuals and organizations which act as Good Samaritans to help people without regard to their immigration status.
- **Safeguard asylum seekers** by ensuring them a fair legal process without penalizing them with increased, unnecessary bureaucracy.

Immigration legislation must take into account the lives of over fifty million American families impacted by border policies; economic and trade repercussions; the feasibility of reform and costs associated with its implementation; and the impact it will have on both domestic and international political climates. We call for both the House and Senate to pass a comprehensive reform bill that will be just, humane and compassionate.

Church World Service (CWS)

A Theological Statement on Immigration (2007)

In Scripture, the ethical responsibility of extending hospitality to the stranger is a key requirement of faithfulness. At the center of Christian ethics is the challenge and the opportunity to love the stranger as ourselves and to love the stranger as one with whom Jesus explicitly identifies.

In the national context of the current debate on immigration it is imperative for Christian churches to be bearers of the biblical and historical tradition of hospitality in our own local contexts. This means that the people of God must practice mercy to the stranger. In Scripture, the stranger is often characterized by the condition of vulnerability. Their vulnerability reminds us of our own dependence on the kindness of God and instructs us to act towards the stranger as God has acted towards us.

The stranger, by definition, is an outsider, and may be excluded from the networks which insiders rely on for the satisfaction of their daily needs. Therefore, Christian teaching about hospitality insists that strangers be treated the same as insiders and so, the outsider becomes our neighbor. The stranger is created in the image of God and shares the same rights as the rest of us simply because of their humanness.

In welcoming the stranger the people of God are required to establish justice on their behalf. Given the vulnerability of undocumented migrants in the United States, the role of churches advocating for the stranger is a crucial matter of justice and a corporate expression of our faith. Political advocacy is a legitimate aspect of the mission of the church for it affirms the human dignity of migrants and seeks to ensure their equal access to economic, social, and political resources. Justice for the stranger means that those who contribute to our communities should be given opportunities for full membership in these communities.

Lastly, in welcoming the stranger the people of God must seek transforming relationships with the stranger. In Scripture, the stranger often appears as a “herald,” or one who brings news. In the book of Hebrews, the writer says in giving hospitality to the stranger you may be welcoming an angel without knowing it. Therefore, we as God’s people welcome the stranger not only because we are commanded to do so, but because through their lives and their stories we hear the good news of God’s love and faithfulness to all of humanity. In the presence of the stranger God is calling us to new horizons of opportunity and responsibility, in which, hospitality to the stranger is necessary for the church’s faithfulness to God.

In the history of the U.S. there is no question that immigration changes both residents and immigrants. We are mutually transformed. In responding directly to the challenges of immigration, the biblical ethic of hospitality leads Christian churches to emphasize, not the threats, but rather the gifts and the possibilities for a creative multicultural community which immigrants bring to us.

This document was signed by one hundred thirty-eight (138) religious leaders and professors. See original online text for list of signatories.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.nccusa.org/immigration/Theological_Sign-On_Statement_Signed.pdf

Church World Service (CWS) The Bible as the Ultimate Immigration Handbook: Written By, For, And About Migrants, Immigrants, Refugees, And Asylum Seekers (October 2006)

(The following is a work in progress by the Rev. Joan M. Maruskin, former Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program Washington Representative. Parts have been presented in churches and national conferences since 1994. This version made available October 2006. Use by individuals and by congregational, denominational and ecumenical groups is allowed. May not be republished without written permission. Permission granted for present use July 23, 2008, by Jennifer Smyers, CWS Associate Director for Immigration and Refugee Program who may be contacted at 202-481-6935, jsmyers@churchworldservice.org.)

The Bible begins with the migration of God's Spirit and ends with John in exile on the Isle of Patmos. Between those two events, the uprooted people of God seek safety, sanctuary, and refuge, and the living God gives directions for welcoming the stranger.

In the beginning, all was darkness and void, and the spirit of God moved (migrated) over the face of the chaos (**Genesis 1:1**). To move is to migrate. The biblical story is a migration story. The Bible begins with God's spirit migrating over the face of the water, followed by God, who, after creating the birds, fish, and animals (all of which migrate), moved throughout creation looking for a caretaker for this world. Not finding one, God said, "Let us create humankind, male and female, in our own image..." (**Genesis 1:26**). God did just that and created Adam and Eve in God's own image and gave them dominion over all the earth and told them to multiply and fill the earth. To do that, it was necessary for them to begin the human migration story. That story is told throughout the Bible and continues to this day in the movement of the migrating pilgrim people of God, who continue to move, to multiply, and to maintain the earth.

We are all part of God's great plan of migration. The great majority of people have either lived out the migration story or can trace their roots back to ancestors traveling from one land to another. In fact, if we embrace Adam and Eve as our original ancestors, we are all migrants in a strange land and very far from home.

Take a moment and consider your personal migration. Are you where you were born? Have you moved, and, if so, for what reason? How many times have you moved? Many of us move by choice, others by necessity, and others by force. Humankind's story is a migration story. We all are, or have been migrants, immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. As believers in the God of Abraham, we trace our roots back to the Garden of Eden located in the area of four rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates. Although the exact location of the garden is not known geographically, we can surmise location from the full text that says the Gihon flows around the land of Cush (which is now known as Ethiopia) and the Tigris is east of Assyria and the other is the Euphrates. Using biblical data, the Garden of Eden can be surmised to be located in either Ethiopia or modern-day Iraq. Those of us who live in the Western World are a long way from home and living in lands that were not even known to exist in biblical times. Adam and Eve have migrated a very long way.

The Creator God brought Adam and Eve into being. There are two creation stories in the Bible. The first is the full chapter of **Genesis 1-2:3**, in which God creates the world and all things in it in six days. God states that it is very good and rests on the seventh day. In **Genesis 2:4-25**, God first creates Adam and then Eve and gives instructions on living in the Garden. Adam and Eve do not

follow God's directions and, because of their disobedience, they are eventually exiled (**Genesis 3:22-24**), but not before God sews skins together to cover them and protect them from the elements. God's concern for the strangers moving throughout the world begins at this point and continues throughout the Bible.

Welcoming the stranger is the central theme of biblical hospitality. It is an inclusive hospitality that always makes room for the stranger. It also shows that no person is to be excluded. The first example of inclusive hospitality is seen when Adam and Eve's son Cain kills his brother, Abel (**Genesis 4:8-16**). As punishment, God makes him a wanderer on the earth. But before sending him away, God puts a mark of protection on Cain – so that no one will kill him. The criminal migrant was protected so he would not be harmed in his wanderings.

Today very few migrants [criminals or not] are protected. If they are undocumented, they are arrested and deported. Asylum seekers, who have been persecuted in their homelands, are routinely placed in immigration detention and must defend themselves or seek legal help from behind bars.

As humans multiplied, the population of the earth continued to increase until it became corrupt and filled with violence. God's plan included a great flood that would wipe out all of humanity except for one small remnant. At over five hundred years of age, Noah was chosen to continue the human race. With the help of his wife, sons, and their wives, he built the ark and filled it with two of each kind of living creature (**Genesis 6:5–8:22**). The "Noahs" were forced to flee their land because of the great flood, which was probably the greatest natural disaster in the course of human history, perhaps even greater than the tsunami in 2004 and the hurricanes of 2005. These events are considered to have been of biblical proportions and to have happened in areas with much denser populations than those of ancient biblical history, when the world was still being populated, so therefore may have resulted in much higher loss of life.

Noah and his family became migrants without a known destination. Eventually their ark landed several thousand miles from Ellis Island, and the inhabitants were blessed by God and told, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (**Genesis 9:1b**). Later, scripture tells us that from the three sons of Noah – Shem, Ham, and Japheth – and their wives, the whole earth was populated (**Genesis 9:19**).

It is important to note that, in today's world, victims of a natural disaster are not considered eligible for refugee resettlement. Many of them spend the rest of their lives stranded in a strange country or displaced in their homelands. This happened to thousands of displaced persons from the Gulf Coast of the United States and to the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005.

Genesis 10 gives an accounting of the migration of Noah's sons and their descendants as "from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood." Note there was freedom of movement. As the Church of the Brethren teaches: "God made people – people made borders."

It is theorized that if people were free to migrate anywhere in the world, the world's population would balance out and everyone would be able to meet their physical needs in God's economy. Much of the world is starving; however, the world would be able to

sustain us all if the products and produce of the world were shared more equitably. Part of inclusive hospitality is being willing to share what we have with those who have not.

The whole earth spoke one language as the family of Noah migrated (**Genesis 11**). As they had a common language, they built a tower to the heavens. This did not please God, who “scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth...Therefore it was called Babel.” The migration story continued with multiple languages developing as the people moved and cultures were created.

It also causes one to wonder about the wisdom of those calling for English only in the United States. The first explorers brought Spanish into the New World, which was already inhabited by indigenous Native Americans with many languages. In addition, the Southwestern states all were originally part of Mexico, so Spanish is the first language of those states. English is the second western language that was spoken in this country and although the primary language, it is enhanced by numerous other languages, which enhance the linguistic traditions of the USA.

The generations continued on the earth, and the biblical story picked up with Terah (the father of Abram), Abram, his wife Sarai, and his brother’s son Lot settling in Haran. It is there that God spoke to Abram and said, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (**Genesis 12:1**). Abram, Sarai, and Lot became migrants going into and out of Canaan, to the hill country on the east of Bethel. They then journeyed toward the Negreb and because of famine went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien – a stranger (**Genesis 12:10**). They came out of Egypt and eventually separated, with Lot settling near Sodom on the plain of the Jordan and Abram settling by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron (**Genesis 13**).

The God of Abram instructed him to migrate just as today, the voice of God continues to direct people to paths of migration and immigration. Within any faith-based group, many people can be found who have embarked on a faith journey taking them to strange lands because they heard God calling them to migrate to a new job or specific ministry.

In **Genesis 14**, we see the first of many, many biblical battles. In the war, Lot is first taken captive and forced to leave his land. Eventually, Abram rescued him and he was able to return. It is important to remember that whenever there is a war, there will be refugees and internally displaced persons. War NEVER takes place without both of those populations coming into being as a result of the violence. Although this text will not go into depth in describing the biblical wars, the victims, and the results, note: Wherever there is a war, people are uprooted and there are migration stories, refugee stories, and asylum stories.

Note also that, in biblical times, as in previous centuries, the majority of victims of wars were the warriors. In the 20th and 21st century, the majority of victims are civilians and the majority of civilians are women and children. Eighty [80] percent of the world’s refugees are women and children. Estimates have the women and children killed in conflicts that are presently taking place in 2005 being as high as 90 percent of the victims. They are often referred to as collateral damage.

In **Genesis 15**, God told Abram of his role in the migration story. It is stated, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and

they shall be oppressed for four hundred years” (**Genesis 15:13**). God continued by telling Abram that his offspring would come back to the land of Abram in four generations.

The story continues in Abram and Sarai’s desire for children. At Sarai’s insistence, Hagar, the Egyptian slave-girl, the foreigner, bears Abram a child, Ishmael. Eventually they are exiled into the wilderness and God promises to make Ishmael a great nation – the same promise given later to Isaac (**Genesis 21**).

Ishmael’s offspring become the Muslims and populate much of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and spread across the world. It is important to remember the geographical location of biblical history and to look at the ethnicity of the patriarchs and matriarchs, who are the foundation of the Christian faith. They were Middle Easterners and their descendants are presently being targeted and imprisoned because of their ethnicity.

After the birth of Ishmael and prior to the birth of Isaac, God renames Abram and calls him Abraham and Sarai become Sarah. We are then exposed to the biblical mandate to care for the stranger, as one never knows when the stranger might be God. In **Genesis 18:1-8**, God appears to Abraham as three strangers near the oaks at Mamre. He offers the three men – the strangers – hospitality. He refers to them as “my Lord” and offers them the best of what he has. This is the first biblical description of ideal inclusive hospitality – of giving the very best to strangers – who in this case turned out to be God.

The biblical concept of hospitality is based in offering hospitality to the stranger, the sojourner, the alien, the migrant, and the foreigner. It can be verified in **Deuteronomy 6**, which speaks of being brought into a new land by the Lord. This and many other passages in Deuteronomy, which will be included later, stress the importance of being one with the strangers in the land.

The biblical concept of hospitality is hospitality to the stranger. Entertaining friends and relatives is a different type of contemporary hospitality. As disciples of the Christ, it is important to ask ourselves how many strangers have felt our hospitality. How are we welcoming the stranger?

The importance of this concept of hospitality is seen in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot welcomed the angels, but the townspeople did not. Their lack of hospitality to the stranger brought about their destruction. "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy” (**Ezekiel 16:49**). This story not only points to **Matthew 25** in the New Testament but also shows the importance of listening to God and moving when told to move – without looking back. Lot’s wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.

The refugee story is one of not being able to look back, because there is often only death and destruction behind. The refugee seeks refuge and safety and sanctuary. Those of us in safer lands are mandated and blessed to welcome them with open arms. Welcoming refugees, migrants, immigrants, and/or asylum seekers is an example of inclusive hospitality.

Building a fence around the borders of this country to keep out the strangers in need has not stopped & will not stop migration. Instead, the fence has kept out Christ and the blessings we would receive by welcoming the strangers.

The biblical migration story continued with famine, causing Isaac to settle in the land of Gerar as an alien (**Genesis 26:2**). Then it picked up with Jacob traveling to another land for a wife. Later he was forced to flee because of his brother's violence. God directed him to Bethel. We eventually learn that Jacob settled in "the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan" (**Genesis 37:1**).

Slavery and trafficking are seen when Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, and was transported to Egypt.

Slavery continues to this day under the guise of trafficking. Men, women, and children are trafficked and brought into the U.S. and countries around the world, and forced into hard labor, domestic service, and sexual slavery.

Joseph overcame the circumstances that forced him into slavery. The captive slave rose to power as an integral part of the Egyptian government. He had an opportunity to retaliate for having been sold into slavery, when famine caused mass hunger in his homeland and his brothers came to Egypt seeking grain. Instead of striking back, Joseph followed God's mandate to care for strangers by offering inclusive hospitality and welcomed them, as though they were strangers (in fact, he pretended that they were strangers), gave them grain, and sent them back. The circle was eventually completed when Joseph's father and brothers, their families, flocks, and all they possessed left Canaan and migrated to Goshen, where there was food and Joseph welcomed them (**Genesis 37-47**).

Neither famine nor starvation are grounds for asylum, refugee status, or immigration. United States immigration laws do not allow persons to enter this country simply because they are starving and need to feed their families. This economy needs the migrant workers, who come to feed their families, but it forces them to live undocumented lives, and to work in sub-standard conditions.

The book of **Exodus**, the story of the Exodus – is the story of the movement of the people of God away from slavery and injustice to freedom and new life. It is perhaps the world's greatest and best-known migration story. Exodus began with the Hebrews being oppressed by their taskmasters. Their persecution was increased with the orders of the King of Egypt to have all newborn Hebrew boys killed. However, one was protected and hidden until he was three months old, at which time he was placed in a basket in the river. In today's language he would be referred to as an "Unaccompanied Alien Child." The child was rescued from the river by Pharaoh's daughter, who chose to ignore her father's orders to kill all male infants. She named him Moses, and raised him in Pharaoh's palace.

Unaccompanied children picked up at a U.S. border, unless immediately returned to their country of origin, are placed in juvenile detention facilities. If they are very lucky, they are placed in foster care until a decision about their immigration status is reached.

Moses grew up to witness the oppressive treatment of the Hebrews by the Egyptians. In responding to this injustice, he killed an Egyptian, and became a criminal alien, who fled for his life to a strange land. He was taken in and given sanctuary in Midian.

Today, in the U.S., he would be put in prison, serve his sentence, and eventually be deported back to Egypt, to be imprisoned there if that country would accept him. If it would not, he would spend the rest of his life in prison in the United States.

In Midian, Moses married Zipporah and was eventually called by God to return to Egypt because, in God's words, "The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." Moses wonders how he could possibly do this and God replied, "I will be with you" (**Exodus 3:1- 3:12**). The key phrase was "I will be with you." In the Exodus, God migrated with the Hebrews.

God is a migrant moving with the people! Throughout the Book of Exodus, God traveled with the people and continues to travel with the migrants today.

Moses, returned to Egypt, and facilitated the Hebrew Exodus through a series of plagues and dialogues with Pharaoh meant to bring about the release of his people. When the Hebrews were finally permitted to leave, they left as most refugees leave, with not enough time to pack, but with God leading them. As with all refugees, the Hebrews had to leave abruptly and leave forever, heading to an unknown but promised land.

Ask yourself, what would you pack if you had less than 15 minutes to pack to leave your home forever? This is a decision that modern-day refugees are repeatedly forced to make. The Hebrews left, but their actual status could be debated. They were forced to work in impossible conditions, their pay was not a living wage, and they had harsh task masters; however, if their treatment did not rise to the level of persecution, they would not be considered refugees, but rather migrants looking for work and homes to support themselves and their children.

In **Exodus 14:7** we read, "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines...God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea...The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day.... and a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, that they might travel by day and night. Neither...left its place in front of the people." God migrated with the people. God was, is, and always will be a migrant, migrating with the migrants of the world, seeking to protect them and find safe haven for them. And it is important to remember that this migration pattern also included care of the refugees. God provided manna and water and all they needed to survive.

A compass might have taken a few years off the 40-year journey, which if done today using a map is an 11-day walk.

Eventually the Hebrews reached Canaan and prepared to enter the Promised Land. They entered the Promised Land and the Canaanites had their land taken away from them, became refugees and internally displaced persons, and were made to do forced labor. The joy of the Hebrews resulted from the destruction and displacement of the Canaanites. There cannot be victors without victims.

Details can be found in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. An example that is even closer to home is the knowledge that the indigenous people of North America, the Native Americans, were decimated from disease and violence and placed on reservations. Their homeland was taken away from them, so others could claim it as their promised land.

Along with the details of entering the Promised Land, the Bible also contains advice on how the people are to act once they are in that land, and one of the first instructions is found in **Deuteronomy 10:17-19**, “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Do we show impartiality in our present immigration laws? If not, why not? How many churches have ministries of hospitality to the strangers, the aliens, the sojourners? Repeatedly the mandate from God in the Hebrew Bible is to care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Although it is not at all unusual for churches to have ministries to widows and orphans, it is rather rare for churches to have ministries to the strangers in the land. Ask the people of your church, “What three groups of people does God mandate that we care for in the Hebrew Bible?” See how many get all three groups right.

Deuteronomy includes numerous statements of how God’s people are to care for the alien in the land. In **Deuteronomy 14:19**, we read, “The Levite, because he has no portion of inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

Our blessings from God are directly dependent on our welcoming the stranger. God blesses us with grace and God expects us to respond to the blessings we are given by blessing others.

Additional passages in **Deuteronomy** are:

- **23:7**, “You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.”
- **24:17**, “You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge.”
- **25:19**, “When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.”

All of **Deuteronomy 26** is important, as it shows the relationship between each and every person’s ancestry and the responsibility that is placed on the people of God to care for the alien. One example is **Deuteronomy 26:5b**, which reads, “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien....” We are reminded that we all spring from wanderers on the earth.

How would your statement read? A wandering _____ was my ancestor. What nationality or ethnicity would you put in the blank? How far back can you trace your roots?

That same chapter, in **26:11**, continues, you shall set down the first of the fruit of the ground and bow before the Lord. “Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you,

shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and your house.” The chapter continues to express the importance of caring for others and in **26:12**, during the third year, which is the year of the tithe; it is to be given “to the Levites, the aliens, the orphans, and the widows.” The sacred portion is given to these groups at God’s command.

Once again the mandate is affirmed and it foreshadows the New Testament mandate to care for the neediest.

In fact, care of the alien is so important that **Deuteronomy 27:19** states, “Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow. And all the people shall say Amen.

There is a translation that reads, “Cursed is the nation....” Perhaps this is a prophetic warning for governments to consider closely.

Along with Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible giving guidance for treating refugees, we also find advice in Psalms. It is important to note that refugees will often refer to the Psalms that they read and recited to themselves as they were fleeing and seeking a safe haven. One that is used very often is **Psalm 91**, which begins: “You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” For God will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge...”

As well as giving hope to the uprooted people of the world since biblical times, the Psalms also define the refugee experience. This is best seen in **Psalm 137**: “By the rivers of Babylon – we sat down there and we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?”

This remains the question for all persons who are uprooted in this century. How can they sing in a foreign land, especially one that does not welcome them and in fact seeks to expel them and treat them as less than second class citizens?

The story of uprooted people continues throughout the Hebrew Bible as the Hebrews claim the Promised Land and are eventually sent into exile and later return. This pattern can be followed in Kings, Chronicles, Esther, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Amos.

In 605 BC, Daniel and his three friends were captured by Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon. Eventually the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah were also in exile. It is while in exile that Isaiah prophesies the coming of the Christ. See **Isaiah 40-55**. In **Isaiah 40:3** we read, “A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” In addition in **Isaiah 61: 1-2a** we read the words that are on the scroll that Jesus reads when he first stands up to read in the synagogue to formally begin his ministry. They are: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor....” The time of exile was a time of prophecy preparing the way of the Lord.

In Amos 5:24, the prophet calls for justice to roll down like water and righteous like an ever flowing stream. In God's economy, all people are sisters and brothers and share equally and are welcomed. The stranger is cherished and welcomed.

Literally everyone was on the move and most went into exile at some time. This includes the prophets, the priests, and the people. Exile shows no mercy; however, there are persons who did not and do not go into exile. **2 Kings 24:14** explains, "Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land."

This situation continues to this day. It is not uncommon for the poorest to be left behind, those who simply are not able to pick up and move and must remain in horrific conditions. Some are internally displaced and move to a different part of the country seeking safety and a way to take care of their basic needs. Others are referred to as the internally stuck – things are so bad; there is no possibility of their fleeing.

The migration story is key to understanding biblical ancestry. In the book of **Ruth**, one family is the focal point. It began with Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, who took Moabite wives, having to leave Judah and move to Moab because of a famine. Eventually all the men died, and the women were left alone. Naomi was a stranger in a strange land. She learned that there was no longer famine in Judah, so she exercised her right to return. However, she did not go alone. Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law, said, in **Ruth 1:16**, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God!" The rest of the story is the story of Boaz adhering closely to God's requirement to offer hospitality to the stranger. He permitted Ruth to glean, protected her, and eventually married her bringing the undocumented sojourner into the fold, making her part of the family.

She was an undocumented immigrant and Boaz married her, giving her status in the land. Fortunately for both of them, there were no I-130 family petitions to sign or other immigration regulations to make life difficult. Also, she did not have to leave the country for three to ten years before being allowed to return begin life as his wife. This could be called a marriage of convenience.

Job also knew the importance of caring for the stranger. In **Job 31:32**, he states, "The alien has not lodged outside, (for) I have opened my doors to the traveler.

How many of us can say that? However, we may have the opportunity to do just that. The present fear of the stranger in the United States and the targeting of undocumented workers, immigrants, and asylum seekers of certain ethnicities are providing an opportunity for churches to renew and reinstate the biblical concept of inclusive hospitality.

The Hebrew Bible closes with an admonition from God through the prophet Malachi, who, in **Malachi 3:5**, repeats the words of the Lord of Hosts, "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts."

This is a very strong statement against exploitation of undocumented workers and day laborers, and against people and governments who mistreat the strangers in our land. It is an appropriate precursor to the New Testament and the ministry of Jesus.

The New Testament begins with a migration story, and perhaps the only documented, recorded “alien” story. Alien is a term that is offensive to many, as it brings to mind a vision of someone from outer space. Looking at it in that manner, one might say that perhaps Jesus was truly an “alien.” He came from heaven (the outer limits of space – although he did tell us the kingdom is within) and took the form of a human being to become for us the Refugee Christ. The reality is that all Christians owe their salvation to a refugee.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, to which his parents had traveled because of the taxation decree. Tradition says the Christ Child was born in a manger, a stable, a shed like the children of many of today’s migrants, who are born along the road as their parents seek work and a place to call home. The news of his birth was given first to the shepherds, the group of people lowest on the social scale at that time. They were also a group of migrants, who moved and lived with their flocks doing seasonal work. Also, at the birth of Jesus, “Magi” from the east, who were probably astrological magicians or sorcerers from Persia, Babylon, or Arabia, come to Jerusalem seeking the “child who has been born King of the Jews.” The Bible does not indicate that there were three Magi or that they were kings. In fact, a distinction of “king” and “Magi” is made in **Matthew 2:1**. The term “Magi” comes from the same root as “magic” and “magicians.” Such persons (Dan. 2:2) watched the stars, were able to predict solar and lunar eclipses, and attempted to predict events to come. Strangers/foreigners from afar read the stars and identified the Messiah.

According to Luke, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph stayed in Bethlehem until they took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated and then returned to Nazareth. According to Matthew, they stayed in Bethlehem until the visit of the Magi. It is estimated that Jesus was about two years old at the time. Once the Magi left, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him. Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son” (**Matthew 2:13-15**).

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph became asylum seekers in Egypt. Without travel documents, they crossed the border, looking for safety and sanctuary. Although they were strangers, someone took them in. Someone welcomed them and protected them.

Keep ethnicity in mind, to be able to hide in Egypt, the Holy Family would have had to look very much like the people of that land, which would be very different from the modern-day images of them.

Meanwhile, in Bethlehem, Herod had plans to find and kill Jesus. When he discovered the Magi had left without telling him the location of the Child, he ordered the killing of all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under.

Jesus and his family fled political and religious persecution. These are both present-day grounds for asylum and refugee status.

However, if the Holy Family arrived at a U.S. border today, it is most likely that Jesus would be sent to a children's detention center, Mary to a women's detention center, and Joseph to a men's detention center. Each would be required to secure their own legal help, or plead their case, on their own, for asylum. Asylum seekers do not receive legal help from the government, and although there are a few family shelters in this country, most families are separated on arrival at the border.

After the death of Herod, the family was able to return to their home, in the district of Galilee, in a town called Nazareth. That was not Jesus' last move. **Matthew 4:12** explains that eventually he left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea. It was from there that he began to call his disciples to follow him.

Later in **Luke 9:58**, Jesus says, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

This is the migrant's story. Like Jesus, who had a home in Capernaum, but often no place to lay his head because of his travels, today's migrants, too, have homes in their countries, but no place to lay their heads in the country to which they have migrated.

Throughout his life, Jesus moved around. He called his disciples to leave what they were doing and to follow him. In fact, if Jesus and the twelve disciples tried to enter the United States today, they would either be the victims of expedited removal, which means they would be immediately returned to their point of origin, or they would, most probably, be put in immigration detention.

They were thirteen Middle Eastern men. They had no specific home. They moved from place to place and often interacted with stigmatized communities. They went away into the mountains and across the lakes. They were suspected of trying to mobilize the masses against the government. It is not known how they supported themselves, and, at times, they met in rented rooms. Large crowds followed them and both the religious and political communities thought they were instigating uprisings of the masses of the poorest of the poor. On arriving in the U.S. today, they would be part of the targeted list of high-level suspicion of terrorism – primarily because of their place of birth and physical appearance.

Jesus was quite active in supporting the people most in need. He readily saw the plight of the day laborers and resonated with their desire to make a living. Most notable is **Matthew 20:1-16**. In it, he likens the kingdom of heaven to a landowner who hires laborers for his vineyard. He hires people throughout the day and pays them all equally, finally summarizing what he does with "the last will be first and the first will be last." Jesus understood the plight of the workers and resonated with the Hebrew Bible mandate to treat the workers fairly.

This importance of just wages is seen in **Malachi 3:5**, when God says, "...I will be swift to bear witness against...those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of Hosts." The fair treatment of day laborers is seen in **Leviticus 19:13**, "You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning."

Jesus knew the scriptures very well. It is not difficult to imagine Jesus standing among the day laborers on any city street looking for work and welcome. Christians who hire day

laborers and undocumented workers are reminded of the biblical mandate to care for the stranger because he or she might be Christ in disguise. (Who would want to cheat Jesus out of a just wage?) The importance of fair treatment of workers throughout the Bible is the basis for followers of Christ becoming involved in comprehensive immigration reform.

The most compelling argument Christ gave for caring for the stranger can be found in **Matthew 25:35-41**. In it he gives the inheritance of the kingdom to those who cared for him by stating, “...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

All of the following are responses to the mandate to offer hospitality to the stranger: Food to the refugees – here and abroad; water to the migrants crossing the desert; an open church door to the stranger with nowhere to turn; clothing to the migrant newly arrived in the north or the refugee being resettled in your town; medical care for migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers; prison visits to detained asylum seekers and immigrants. Responding to these needs can be the foundation of a ministry to the strangers in our communities and our land and are ways to practice inclusive hospitality.

Persons working with immigrant, migrant, refugee, and asylum populations are often heard wondering how to convince more churchgoers to help these members of Christ’s family. Jesus was very clear in his message: Help them and you go to heaven. Don’t help them and you go to hell. Jesus came to bring a new commandment, a commandment of love of all people. He taught love of God, neighbor, and yourself; and he added a completely new thought – a completely new teaching – *love your enemy*. With that he commanded us to love all people. There is no room in Christ’s teachings for “them and us” mentality. In **Matthew 25:40**, he clearly states that all, including people who might be seen as the “least of these,” are members of his family. As we consider ourselves members of his family, obviously we are all in this together and called to care for each other. When Jesus is asked by the young man, “Who is my neighbor?”, Jesus answers through the parable of the Good Samaritan in **Luke 10:33**, who was on a journey, came upon a man – not a Samaritan, most probably someone who would not have spoken to the Samaritan. However, the man had been badly beaten and was in need of help. When the Samaritan saw him, he felt compassion, and cared for him. The Samaritan would have been considered the stranger in the land the outsider, not a citizen of the land. His presence was not wanted by the people of the land, and yet he, the outsider, is the one who helps the man who has been robbed. He shows compassion and responds by showing love to the person who would consider him an enemy. For this act he becomes known throughout history as “The Good Samaritan.”

Jesus’ life was a life of service to others, without regard for their national origin. His service to strangers can be seen in **Luke 17:1-19** with the healing of the lepers. Ten are made clean, but only one returns. In verse **17-18**, when only the foreigner returns, Jesus asked, “But the other nine, where are they? Were not ten made clean? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Jesus offered his healing love to all. We are called to do the same.

Jesus was not only a refugee and a migrant. He was also undocumented both as a child and at the end of his life. We know that Jesus was crucified “outside the gates” of the city because he was not a citizen (**Hebrews 13:12**). As Christians, we know that he died for the sins of the world, but at that

time the theological implications of his death were not considered in handing down his sentence. Jesus was crucified because he was one with the oppressed and marginalized people of that time, and the religious and political powers feared he was instigating an uprising of the poor. The Romans thought Jesus was planning to overthrow those in power. He was one with the stranger, the sojourner, the migrant, the day laborer, the least, the last, and the lost. He did not have the rights of a citizen (*he was one with each and every undocumented migrant in the world*). Because he did not have these rights, his crucifixion had to be outside the gates and it was in the garbage dump of the city. He suffered, so others would not have to do the same.

The next time you hear of the death of an undocumented person, stop a moment and think of the undocumented Christ and remember we never know when the person we are looking at is Christ in one of his disguises. Since 1995, over 3,000 migrants have died crossing the U.S./Mexico border in their search for work and survival.

By reinforcing biblical hospitality, the New Testament urges validation of each person. **Hebrews 13:1-3** urges, “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.” The Greek word for hospitality is “philoxenos.” It means love for the stranger and was recognized as a primary characteristic of the early followers of Christ. The mandate was, is, and remains clear: to live lives of inclusive hospitality, to recognize that Christ comes to us in the form of the stranger, and to be one with the prisoners, the persecuted, the undocumented, the refugee, the migrant, the immigrant, the stranger. Throughout the New Testament, we see people moving freely, without borders, and we see new life, as their lives are changed through contact with Christ and/or his disciples. Paul reinforces this teaching in **Romans 12:13**, with, “Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”

Jesus’ last message to his disciples was a migration/immigration message. It is a statement that not only calls for migration, but also insists on it. **Matthew 28:18-19** is the great commission, in which Jesus says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Apparently, Jesus assumes the role of the migrant God traveling with each and every disciple as they move throughout the world. It is also important to remember that at that time, North America was not a known part of the world. At that time, it would have been considered the ends of the earth. We are the ends of the earth; are we obeying everything Jesus commanded?

But the story was not over at that point. It continued, as followers of Christ became migrant messengers, taking his teachings throughout the known world. They recognize that divisions between all of humankind have been dismantled. **Galatians 3:29-29** states, “There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” They took this message and belief with them and they traveled as immigrants, as refugees, and as migrants. They were and are imprisoned, they were and are persecuted, and they were and are exiled.

Religious persecution is still grounds for asylum.

The early disciples believed they were strangers in this life moving on to the heavenly kingdom. In **I Peter 2:11-13**, they are reminded that they are aliens and exiles in this world. They are the beginning of a long line of pilgrim people and a part of the continuing biblical migratory cycle following the mandates of God, the teachings of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament ends with John's writing of the Book of Revelation, in exile, on the Isle of Patmos. The biblical story that began with migration ends with migration and exile, and continues as the migrant God accompanies each and every migrant on his or her journey of hope. And it extends far, far, into the future, with the new Jerusalem, the city of God, on the move, coming from heaven to earth. When that happens, the circle of migration will be completed and the world made new.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.churchworldservice.org/PDFs/refugees/Biblehandbook.pdf

Church World Service (CWS)

Church World Service is part of the ecumenical family of the National Council of Churches USA.

Member Communion

African Methodist Episcopal Church
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National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
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Reformed Church in America
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The Swedenborgian Church
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Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America
United Church of Christ
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Affiliated Organizations

American Bible Society
American Leprosy Mission
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Heifer International
Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc.
Ludhiana Christian Medical College Board

Lutheran World Relief
Mennonite Central Committee
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Young Men's Christian Association
Young Women's Christian Association

The Episcopal Church Immigration Reform

America has been the beneficiary of the rich contributions of immigrants since our inception as a nation. We should uphold this tradition of being a welcoming nation. We recognize the security concerns that must be given heightened attention during this critical time in our history. However, our historic tradition of offering rescue and hope to the oppressed and receiving with gratitude the contributions of the newcomer should not be abandoned.

The Episcopal Church has a long tradition of advocating for the just and humane treatment of immigrants and refugees. In the current immigration debate, there is concern that attempts to change the U.S. immigration system could infringe upon the rights and obligations of religious and humanitarian organizations to extend support and assistance to those who come to them for help. The Episcopal Church resists legislation that would make unlawful deeds of compassion done in the name of our faith or inhibit the ability of our churches to relieve the suffering of those whom we are called to serve.

The Presiding Bishop, Bishops and Executive Council of the Episcopal Church continue to speak out in favor of comprehensive immigration reform that results in U.S. policy that is in sync with the gospel mandate to welcome the stranger among us. Here are several important statements from the leadership of our church that reflect its ongoing commitment to immigrants.

Episcopal Church

75th General Convention Passes Resolution on Immigration

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church receive “The Alien Among You” in the Blue Book Report of the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns; and, while recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders, adopt the following fundamental principles included in “The Alien Among You” as the policy of the Episcopal Church.

1. Undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency.
2. Legal workers should be allowed to enter the United States to respond to recognized labor force needs.
3. Close family members should be allowed to reunite without undue delay with individuals lawfully present in the United States.
4. Fundamental U.S. principles of legal due process should be granted all persons.
5. Enforcement of national borders and immigration policies should be proportional and humane.

And be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work, and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church undertake a campaign to educate Episcopalians as to the plight of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, which will include information about the root causes of migration, and be it further

Resolved, That this campaign call the church to commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their wellbeing and protection and to urge its members to resist legislation and actions which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.

June 29, 2006

Document Sources (April 2009):

http://ecusa.anglican.org/3687_74625_ENG_HTM.htm?menu=menu32080

http://ecusa.anglican.org/3687_76477_ENG_HTM.htm

Evangelical Leaders

Letter to President Bush and Members of Congress

April 4, 2006

Dear President Bush and Members of Congress:

We are writing to you as non-partisan Evangelical leaders and churches who are concerned about the issue of immigration in the United States. We urge you to support comprehensive immigration reform. The current state of immigration in this country is a complex situation, which requires a workable solution beyond increasing enforcement mechanisms.

We support comprehensive immigration reform, based on Biblical mandates, our Christian faith and values, and our commitment to civil and human rights. We value immigrants as human beings, made in the image of God. We are aware of the obstacles that immigrants face, especially undocumented individuals, because they are vital members of our churches, our communities, and our nation. Evangelical immigrants are a continually growing part of our churches.

God requires that we show love and compassion to aliens. In Deuteronomy 10:18—19, we learn that “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.” Leviticus 19:33-34 teaches us, “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

We are deeply concerned with the possibility of some anti-immigrant provisions being included in legislation that could pass in Congress this year. Instead, we encourage Congress and the Administration to enact comprehensive immigration reform that includes the following principles.

- Reforms in our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;
- The creation of more responsive legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner that prevents their exploitation and assures them due process;
- The option for those individuals and families who are already living in the U.S. and working hard to apply for permanent legal status and citizenship if they choose to do so, by meeting specific application criteria; and
- Border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of enforcing our laws.

Thank you for your consideration of these important principles.

Sincerely,

This letter was signed by twelve (12) national evangelical organizations, six (6) local churches and other evangelical organizations, and three (3) individual evangelical leaders. See original online text for list of signatories.

Document Source (April 2009): www.cirnow.org/file/706.pdf

National Evangelical Organizations:

Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI
Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Executive Director
Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO, Board of General Superintendents
Esperanza USA, Philadelphia, PA, Rev. Luis Cortes, Jr., President
Evangelicals for Social Action, Philadelphia, PA, Ronald J. Sider, President
Floresta USA Inc., San Diego, CA, Scott Sabin, Executive Director
Hispanic Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Dallas, TX, Rev. Mark Gonzales,
President & Policy Liaison for The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
Jubilee Campaign USA, Fairfax, VA, Ann Buwalda, Esq., Director
Latino Leadership Foundation, Chicago, IL, Noel Castellanos, President
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, Sacramento, CA
Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, Jr., President and CEO
Sojourners, Washington, DC, Jim Wallis, Executive Director
World Evangelical Alliance, Washington, DC, Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director
World Relief, Baltimore, MD, Sammy Mah, President and CEO
Dr. Gordon MacDonald, Chairman of the Board of Directors

Local Churches and Other Evangelical Organizations:

Bilingual Christian Church of Baltimore, Dr. Angel L. Nunez , Baltimore, MD
Grace Life Church, Rev. Roger Kim, Baltimore, MD
Iglesia Cristiana Alianza, Rev. Armando Vera, McAllen, TX
New Hope Community Church, Rev. Jason Poling, Baltimore, MD
The Brethren Church, Rev. Kenneth Hunn, Ashland, OH
The Latino Network of Virginia Baptists, Dr. Daniel Carro, Chair Person, Richmond, VA

Individual Evangelical Leaders:

Dr. Will Ackles, Pastor, Calvin Presbyterian Church, Shoreline, WA
Gerson Guillermo Amaya, Pastor, Iglesia Evangelica Libre "Hazel," Chicago, IL
Leith Anderson, Former President, National Association of Evangelicals
Pastor, Wooddale Church, Eden Prairie, MN
Rev. George Antonakos, Associate Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD
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Church of the Nazarene, Kennewick, WA
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Senior Research Fellow, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Grand Rapids, MI
Crissy Brooks, Executive Director, Mika Community Development Corporation, Costa Mesa, CA
Rev. Steve Brown, Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, San Bruno, CA
Rev. Dr. Clive Calver, Senior Pastor, Walnut Hill Community Church
Former President, World Relief, Bethel, CT

Peter T. Cha, PhD, Associate Professor, Pastoral Theology Department
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Dr. Gustavo Crocker, Regional Director, Eurasia Region, Church of the Nazarene

Daniel de Leon, Pastor, Templo Calvario
Founder, Templo Calvario Community Development Corporation, Santa Ana, CA

Laird R. O. Edman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology
Northwestern College, Orange City, IA

Diane Eldridge, Pastor, Lincoln Glen Church, San Jose, CA

Dr. David Espinoza, Board of Directors, Global University, Assemblies of God, San Fernando, CA

Jerry L. Ferguson, District Superintendent, Los Angeles District Church of the Nazarene

Deborah Fikes, Executive Director, Midland Ministerial Alliance, Midland, TX

Rev. Dr. Jim Fitzgerald, Senior Pastor, Trinity Church of the Nazarene,
Iglesia del Nazareno Trinidad, Duncanville, TX

Carlos Guadagno, Pastor, Crown of Love Evangelical Free Church, Palatine, IL

Julio Guarneri, Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Getsemani, Fort Worth, TX

Dan Haas, Pastor, Aurora Community Church, Aurora, IL

Dr. William J. Hamel, President, Evangelical Free Church of America, Minneapolis, MN

Rev. Philip R. Hamner, Senior Pastor, Overland Park Church of the Nazarene, Overland Park, KS

Dr. Derrick Harkins, Pastor, 19th Street Baptist Church, Washington, DC

Dr. Juan Hernandez, Founder, Center for US-Mexico Studies, University of Texas at Dallas
Former Cabinet Member for Mexican President Vicente Fox, Fort Worth, TX

Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland -- A Church Distributed, Longwood, FL

Dr. Roberto Hodgson, Hispanic Mission Director, Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO

Rev. R D Hudgens, Lead Pastor, Reba Place Church, Evanston, IL

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Rev. Paul Kortenhoven, Christian Reformed World Missions, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Brian Kluth, Senior Pastor, First Evangelical Free Church
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Rev. David Lazo, World Harvest Spanish Churches

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Rev. Valerie Coe Lowder, Pastor, Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Church, Virginia Beach, VA

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Dr. Tom Patterson, Pastor, Lake Forest Park Presbyterian Church, Lake Forest Park, WA

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Pascal Permis, Haitian Mission Director, Church of the Nazarene, Indiantown, FL

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Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO

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Dr. James E. Plueddemann, Professor Missions and Evangelism

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Rev. Felix Posos, Superintendent, Assemblies of God, Northern Pacific

Dr. Albert Reyes, President, Baptist University of the Americas, San Antonio, TX

Paul Rhoads, Executive Vice-President, Church Resource Ministries, Vancouver, WA

Kenneth Ritz, Senior Pastor, New Life Vineyard Church

Vineyard Church Area Coordinator for Southwest Ohio, Hamilton, OH

Dr. Dennis Rivera, Superintendent, Assemblies of God, Rocky Mountains

Robert G. Russell, Senior Pastor, Yakima New Hope Community Church of the Nazarene

Yakima, WA

John E. Schmidt, Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD

Mike Schutz, Senior Pastor, Avon Grove Church of the Nazarene, West Grove, PA

Dr. Lindy Scott, Professor of Latin American Studies

Director of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Mark H. Senter III, PhD, Chair of the Educational Ministries Department

Professor of Educational Ministries, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

James W. Skillen, President, The Center for Public Justice, Annapolis, MD

Greg Smith, Ministry Among Latinos, Virginia Baptist Mission Board, Fredericksburg, VA

Phillip N. Smith, Executive Pastor, Walnut Hill Community Church, Bethel, CT

Rev. Dr. John Smucker, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Flushing, NY

Howard A. Snyder, Professor, E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission & Evangelism

Director, Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movement

Asbury Theological Seminary University

Professor of World Christianity, Spring Arbor University

Rev. Dr. James A. Stackpole, United Church of Christ, Retired, Williamsburg, VA

Kirsten Strand, Director, Community 4:12 of Community Christian Church, Naperville, IL

Richard L. van Houten, General Secretary, The Reformed Ecumenical Council, Grand Rapids, MI

Rev Elizabeth Vander Haagen, Pastor, Boston Square Christian Reformed Church

Grand Rapids, MI

Peter Vander Meulen , Coordinator, Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action
Christian Reformed Church in North America, Grand Rapids, MI

Kathryn H. Vaselkiv, Board Member, World Relief, Elder, Central Presbyterian Church
Baltimore, MD

Dr. Gilbert Velez, Senior Pastor, Mercy Church, Laredo, TX

Dr. John P. Williams, Jr., General Superintendent
Evangelical Friends Church -- Eastern Region, Canton, OH

Brad Wong, The River Church Community, San Jose, CA

This letter remains open for endorsement on a rolling basis. To endorse, please contact Jenny Hwang at: 443-451-1969 or immigration@wr.org. Please indicate your name, title, organization and location, and whether you wish to sign on as a national organization, local church or organization, or individual Evangelical leader.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Immigration

This message was approved by the Board of the Division for Church in Society and was adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on November 16, 1998.

With this message, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, upon recommendation of the Division for Church in Society, offers to congregations "a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants and a resource to interpret and apply ELCA policy related to immigration," as called for by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (CA97.6.39).

We recognize and rejoice that our church along with our country continues to change with the steady arrival of newcomers in the United States. Persons who have recently come from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and other areas of the world are enriching congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We celebrate the liturgy in 33 languages; we worship and sing in Spanish with our new *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico*. Newcomers are increasingly assuming leadership roles in our congregations, synods, affiliated educational and social ministry agencies, and churchwide ministries. We are beginning new congregations in immigrant communities. We thank God for these developments, and we remember Paul's admonition: "Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7).

We also recognize the obstacles and difficulties our church and society face in welcoming newcomers. Too often we are slow in, tire of, or even resist fostering a hospitable environment for newcomers. Too often we perpetuate the racism, the fear of, and the animosity toward newcomers that show themselves in our society. Our country's history exhibits an ugly strain of exclusionary attitudes and policies toward newcomers who differ from the majority. In times of economic downturns especially--as happened in the early 1990s--this strain becomes more pervasive and leads to laws that unduly restrict immigration and threaten the well-being of newcomers.

The presence of newcomers in our church and society heightens our awareness of these realities and of the experience of new immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the United States. This awareness makes us more appreciative of the gifts our new neighbors bring and of the barriers as well as the opportunities they encounter. It deepens our belief that "all people are God's creatures, sinners for whom Christ died" and our responsibility to respect the human dignity of all.^[1] This is a fitting time for us to examine anew our attitudes toward newcomers, to strengthen our church's ministry among, with, and for the most vulnerable of newcomers, and to continue to advocate for immigration, refugee, and asylum laws that are fair and generous.

Drawing on Our Experience

How do we who are residents learn to welcome newcomers more graciously? As members of a church with immigrants and with roots in immigrant churches in a nation of immigrants, we are familiar with old and new stories about newcomers. We have heard how persons left their homes for economic or political reasons, journeyed into an uncertain future, and struggled in a strange land to begin a new life. There are stories of hardship, tragedy, courage, resourcefulness, and blessing. There are stories of hostile receptions and welcoming embraces, of tensions between immigrants

and their children over how to live in a new culture, and of conflicts over what language to use in home and church.

Recalling these stories may help those of us whose families have been in this country for a generation or more to empathize with today's newcomers. When a young immigrant woman is exploited by her employer, are we outraged?

We would have been if that woman were our own mother or grandmother shortly after her arrival. When a beautiful array of people from around the world become citizens, do we rejoice? We would have when our own family became citizens. When leaders in our society promote negative stereotypes of newcomers or make them a "scapegoat" for social or economic ills in times of anxiety, are we appalled? We would have been to hear our own ethnic groups degraded when they first arrived. When we learn how our society is being strengthened and renewed by the contributions of newcomers, are we grateful? Earlier generations were grateful for the contributions of those who entered this country through Angel and Ellis Islands or Miami. Recalling that our families were once the "stranger"--and remembering our Lord's call to love our neighbor as ourselves--can expand our moral imagination, enable us to see the new "stranger" as our neighbor, and open us to welcome today's newcomers.

Our church also has a history of hospitality for refugees. Following World War II, when one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person, Lutherans, with the participation of 6,000 congregations, resettled some 57,000 refugees in the United States.^[2]

In the decade after the fall of Saigon in 1975, Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. During the 1980s various congregations provided sanctuary for persons whose lives were endangered by wars in Central America.^[3] In exercising hospitality to the stranger, many testified that they received more than they gave--as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2). Their experience invites us to be gracious hosts as well as humble guests, that is, learners from the newcomers among us. The leaders and congregations that have given us this legacy remind us that hospitality for the uprooted is a way to live out the biblical call to love the neighbor in response to God's love in Jesus Christ. They recall for us God's command to Israel: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34).^[4] They direct us to where Jesus said he is present: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25: 35). They call on Martin Luther to ask us: "How do we know that the love of God dwells in us? If we take upon ourselves the need of the neighbor."^[5] Our desire is to carry on their faith and practice, their exemplary way of faith being active in love. "We pledge to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants."^[6]

Strengthening Our Ministry with the Most Vulnerable

We in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America minister with the most vulnerable of the newcomers through congregations and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). Where possible, we work ecumenically. Our ministry resettles refugees, advocates on behalf of detained asylum seekers, assists unaccompanied children, offers pastoral and legal counsel to persons without legal status, aides persons with the citizenship process, and helps newcomers learn to live in a new country. This ministry requires compassion and competence, is time-consuming, sometimes heart-breaking, and frequently unrecognized. Opportunities abound for members, congregations, pastors, bishops, and all the expressions of our church to support, strengthen, and expand this ministry.

Refugees are persons who have been forced to leave their country "because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution." Through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in partnership with the federal government, Lutherans help to resettle more than 10,000 refugees yearly (75,000 are allowed to enter the United States, 1998). Because congregations working with the LIRS network enrich refugees' resettlement experiences, we encourage efforts that call upon and train members to assist refugees.

[Was your congregation involved in these resettlement efforts? Have you offered hospitality to other refugees or immigrants? If so, what was its significance for the newcomers? For the congregation?]

Persons fleeing dangerous situations in their countries arrive daily in the United States. These asylum seekers lack legal status for entering the country. To receive an opportunity to seek a grant of asylum (a legal protective status), they must prove a "credible fear of persecution."

Because of the difficulty in proving this fear, many asylum seekers are detained while their case is being processed. Thousands of persons, including children and women, are in detention, most of whom are indigent; they are often isolated from pastoral and legal services and subject to abuse and neglect. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service joins with other organizations to advocate on behalf of detained persons. In areas where there are detention centers, congregations are encouraged to work with these organizations to provide services for the detained and to seek alternatives to detention (for example, group homes).

Unaccompanied minors also enter the United States, either as refugees or without legal status. These children may be orphans, separated from their parents by war or disaster, abandoned, or even smuggled into the country. Whatever their status, they should be seen first and foremost as children and youth in need of protection and care. The LIRS network provides foster care and related child welfare services, facilitates family reunification, and advocates on national and international policy issues affecting unaccompanied children.

Newcomers without legal documents also are among the most vulnerable. Congregations are called to welcome all people, regardless of their legal status.^[7] Persons who once were or now are without documents are members of our congregations, and we want them to feel and know that in the Church they are part of a safe and caring community. We encourage bishops and synods to show their support for congregations composed of or working with immigrants who may or may not have documents.

Some congregations provide congregationally-based immigration services. They offer legal and para-legal advice and assistance to newcomers; even when the legal options are limited, their counsel keeps vulnerable people from becoming the victims of unscrupulous exploiters. These congregations offer English language courses and instruction on how to become a citizen. They help immigrants with housing, jobs, and health care. They accompany families with pastoral care and invite them into a worshipping community. They may look to other congregations for pro bono lawyers, teachers of English as a second language, nurses and doctors, and to secure other needed services. Lutheran child care centers and schools increasingly are serving newcomers.

Those who minister with vulnerable newcomers should not be isolated or disconnected from one another. In order to support and strengthen our church's ministry with immigrants, we encourage

churchwide units to continue to work with congregations, synods, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to provide opportunities for these pastors and lay leaders to learn from and support one another.^[8]

["What can we do in our congregation?" A first step is to become acquainted with the immigrant situation in your area. Then ask what Lutheran or ecumenical ministries are present. You may contact your synod office for more information. To see if there is a church-related organization in your area, contact Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.]

Newcomers in our church, pastors and congregations ministering with immigrants, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service also are educators in our church and advocates for those who cannot speak for themselves. Out of their daily experience, they can teach the rest of us about the gifts newcomers bring to our church and country, the often harsh consequences of recent (1996) immigration and welfare laws on family life, or the way immigrants who lack legal status are taken advantage of in working situations. They keep before us--so that we do not forget--the grim realities many immigrants face and the strength of character and resourcefulness newcomers demonstrate. They inform us of conditions in other countries and what the role of the United States has been. They provide our church with experience and knowledge to take part in public deliberation on immigration, refugee, and asylum policies.

[Pastors and congregations beginning to minister with newcomers in their communities and wanting a basic knowledge of immigration laws and terms can contact Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.]

Advocating for Fair and Generous Laws

Immigration, refugee, and asylum policies express who we are as a nation, influence the nation's future character, and affect the lives of millions of people. We encourage our members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good. Our advocacy needs to take into account the complexity of issues, the diversity of interests, and the partial or relative justice of laws at the same time that it counters appeals rooted in hostility, racism, prejudice, indifference, and simplistic solutions. We draw on the best of our nation's traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that "we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants," and that we "will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them."^[9]

The following objectives, set forth in a 1969 statement of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America, have been important for Lutheran church bodies and organizations for nearly forty years and have given content to our understanding of fair and generous immigration laws:

1. To admit to our permanent population a steady proportion of newcomers:

- a. by facilitating the reunification of families;
- b. by facilitating the entry of persons possessing special skills or other capacities needed by the American economy and culture;
- c. by assuming the United States' proper share of international responsibility for the resettlement of refugees and other persons urgently in need of the compassionate haven of a new homeland;
- d. by admitting persons who choose the United States as their new homeland and who impart to their American neighbors an understanding of the culture, attitude, and interests of other races and peoples of the world.

2. To admit annually a reasonable number of the persons described above on an objective basis of selection which, while discriminating, will not be discriminatory with respect to race, national origin, color, or religion, testifying thereby to the United States' recognition of the interlocking and mutual interests of all nations with regard to the migration of peoples, the interaction of cultures, and respect of universal human rights.

3. To provide reasonable access to nationality and citizenship for all immigrants admitted for permanent residence.^[10]

With this understanding Lutheran advocacy supported the landmark 1965 immigration law that ended the four-decade-old quota system of admitting immigrants on the basis of their national origin and race. In place of that earlier policy that favored European nations, Lutheran advocacy supports the concept of one variable cap for immigrants that in principle gives residents of all nations equal opportunity to immigrate. (In 1998 that cap is set at approximately 900,000 people.) Our advocacy will continue to insist that family reunification should be the primary objective of immigration laws. It will oppose efforts to reduce the percentage of people admitted for family reunification reasons as well as costly financial requirements that prohibit immigrants with limited resources from being reunited with family members. It also will oppose policies and practices that actively recruit workers from developing countries to their detriment and to our country's benefit.

Among the many issues related to immigration policy, we highlight the following areas of concern where we think our country's laws can and should be improved:

For lawful permanent residents

Although Congress has restored some benefits for legal immigrants who arrived before 1996, more should be done. The denial of benefits to permanent residents favors wealthier immigrants and creates unwarranted barriers for poorer ones. Most permanent residents are an integral part of our society who abide by the law, pay Social Security and taxes, and contribute to the economic and cultural life of their communities. In order to help assure their well-being, especially of their children, we support legislation that gives them access to the same benefits citizens receive.

Newcomers without legal status

While most newcomers are legal permanent residents or naturalized citizens, a significant number of people, including many agricultural workers, lack legal documents. Many undocumented persons have been here for years. They live under the fear of deportation. Those who become eligible to adjust their status are only allowed to do so by leaving the United States and then waiting years to re-enter. They often fear returning to a troubled land, and if they were to return, it would mean for many indefinite separation from their families in the United States. The existence of a permanent sub-group of people who live without recourse to effective legal protection opens the door for their massive abuse and exploitation and harms the common good. We urge leaders and citizens to seek feasible responses to this situation that offer flexible and humane ways for undocumented persons who have been in this country for a specified amount of time to be able to adjust their legal status.

Refugee policy

Although there are tens of millions of refugees throughout the world, the number admitted into the United States has been decreasing. We believe that our country has a responsibility to increase the number of refugees it admits. We also are concerned that race not be a prejudicial factor in decisions about resettlement, and we urge our government to do more to provide African refugees a fair opportunity to be resettled in our country. We also support fair and compassionate legislative solutions to the precarious plight of refugees whose present temporary legal status is threatened.

Asylum

We advocate for a reliable, consistent, and sensitive implementation of the law governing asylum seekers. At present INS districts treat similar cases in vastly different ways. We oppose practices that create unreasonable obstacles and unattainable standards of proof for those seeking asylum. We support efforts to ensure that due process is followed and that the conditions of detention are humane. We call upon the Immigration and Naturalization Service to recognize the particular vulnerabilities of children by developing child-appropriate standards and procedures. We encourage that agency vigorously to use the channels of communication it has developed with refugee organizations to improve processes and conditions for asylum seekers.

Border with Mexico

We recognize the right of all countries to control their borders and their duty to protect their citizens from the illegal entry of drugs and criminals. But we have serious doubts about the rightness and effectiveness of current policy to erect imposing barriers between the United States and Mexico. We support the search for alternatives to this policy that would more appropriately reflect the relationship of two friendly nations whose peoples and economies are increasingly interdependent. Whatever the policy, border enforcement should always respect the human dignity of persons attempting to cross the border.

The newcomers in our church from around the world remind us that all of us in the Church of Jesus Christ are sojourners, "for here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (Hebrews 13: 14). As we journey together through the time God has given us, may God give us the grace of a welcoming heart and an overflowing love for the new neighbors among us.

Definitions

Asylum seekers -- Persons who have fled their country because of personal danger, who arrive in the United States without legal protection, and who must prove a "credible fear of persecution" to receive an opportunity to seek legal protective status or asylum.

Immigrants -- In immigration law and as generally used in the message, immigrants are lawful permanent residents or naturalized citizens who have come from another country and legally live in the United States. In common usage, immigrants may refer to all newcomers who now live in this country.

Lawful Permanent Residents -- Non-citizens who have received authorization to live permanently in the United States. They receive a "green card" to prove their status.

Newcomers without legal documents -- Persons who have entered the United States without a valid visa or who have remained in the country after their temporary visa has expired. The message also may refer to this group of people as "persons without legal status" or "undocumented persons."

Refugees -- Persons who have "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." This definition from the United Nations' 1951 "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" was adopted by the United States in the Refugee Act of 1980.

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1. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/>
2. <http://archive.elca.org/offsite.asp?url=http://www.lirs.org>
3. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/#>
4. <http://archive.elca.org/offsite.asp?url=http://www.nccusa.org/newbtu/btuhome.html>
5. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/#>

6. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/peace>
7. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/#>
8. <http://archive.elca.org/churchwide.html>
9. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/>
10. <http://archive.elca.org/socialstatements/immigration/#>

Document Source (April 2009)

www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Messages/Immigration.aspx

Hindu American Foundation

H.A.F. Signs Interfaith Statement on Immigration Reform

San Francisco, California - March 24, 2006

The Hindu American Foundation today joined numerous faith-based groups in urging President George W. Bush and elected leaders in Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation that establishes a safe and humane immigration system consistent with American values as well as the values espoused by all the diverse faith traditions practiced in the United States.

The statement, which quoted from Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim scriptures to highlight how all faiths regard charity and kindness to strangers as among the highest virtues, has been signed by over fifty national and over one hundred local faith-based organizations, along with a number of prominent individual leaders.

“There is a need for a fair and equitable immigration legislation that respects the God-given dignity of every individual and his family while also protecting America’s economic and national security interests”, said Swaminathan Venkataraman, member of Hindu American Foundation’s Executive Council. “Hindus are one of the most highly educated and prosperous immigrant communities in the US and we desire that the enormous opportunities that this nation affords should remain open to immigrants in future”, he said.

The statement calls for legislation that supports regularization of existing workers upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria, reduced waiting times for reunification of separated families, legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. and border protection policies that treat all individuals with respect while also allowing authorities to prevent entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals. The full text of the statement can be found at <http://www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/pdf/Interfaith%20Immigration%20Reform%20Statement.pdf>.

(The Hindu American Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3), non-partisan organization, promoting the Hindu and American ideals of understanding, tolerance and pluralism.)

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Document Source (April 2009):

www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/media_press_release_immigration.htm

Hindu American Foundation

Interfaith Statement In Support Of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

We, the undersigned faith-based leaders and organizations, join together to call upon President Bush and our elected officials in Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation that establishes a safe and humane immigration system consistent with our values. Our diverse faith traditions teach us to welcome our brothers and sisters with love and compassion.

The Hebrew Bible tells us: “The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19:33-34).” In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger (cf. Matthew 25:35), for “what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me (Matthew 25:40).” The Qur’an tells us that we should “serve God...and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing] (4:36).” The Hindu scripture Taittiriya Upanishad tells us: “The guest is a representative of God (1.11.2)”

We call for immigration reform because each day in our congregations, service programs, health-care facilities, and schools we witness the human consequences of an outmoded system. We see and hear the suffering of immigrant families who have lost loved ones to death in the desert or immigrants themselves who have experienced exploitation in the workplace or abuse at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers and others. In our view, changes to the U.S. legal immigration system would help put an end to this suffering, which offends the dignity of all human beings.

We call upon our elected officials to enact legislation that includes the following:

- An opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to this county to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria and, over time, pursue an option to become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;
- Reforms in our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;
- The creation of legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected; and
- Border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of identifying and preventing entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals, as well as pursuing the legitimate task of implementing American immigration policy.

While we support the right of the government to enforce the law and protect the national security interests of the United States, we recognize that our existing complex and unworkable immigration system has made it nearly impossible for many immigrants — who seek to support their families or reunite with loved ones — to achieve legal status. Reforming the immigration system to address this reality would allow the U.S. government to focus its enforcement efforts on real threats that face all Americans — citizens and immigrants alike.

We urge our elected officials to conduct the immigration reform debate in a civil and respectful manner, mindful not to blame immigrants for our social and economic ills or for the atrocities

committed by the few who have carried out acts of terrorism. A polarized process that is lacking in civility would hinder deliberative discourse and not serve the best interests of our nation.

As faith-based leaders and organizations, we call attention to the moral dimensions of public policy and pursue policies that uphold the human dignity of each person, all of whom are made in the image of God. We engage the immigration issue with the goal of fashioning an immigration system that facilitates legal status and family unity in the interest of serving the God-given dignity and rights of every individual. It is our collective prayer that the legislative process will produce a just immigration system of which our nation of immigrants can be proud.

This statement was created on October 14, 2005. On March 16, 2006, this statement was signed by fifty (50) national faith organizations, one hundred sixteen (116) local faith organizations, and fifty (50) individual faith leaders. The list of signatories is updated periodically. See the original online text for the current list. This statement remains open for sign-on by faith-based organizations, denominations, individual places of worship, and individual faith leaders. To endorse, please contact Stephanie Faith Green: stephanie.faith.green@hias.org or 202-828-5115.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/pdf/Interfaith%20Immigration%20Reform%20Statement.pdf

The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) Joint Statement Regarding Immigration Concerns

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
FROM: Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, Synod President
Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Director,
LCMS World Relief/Human Care
SUBJECT: A Statement Regarding Immigration Concerns
DATE: June 2, 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

“The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod traces its origin to 750 Saxon immigrants who came to Missouri in 1839 seeking freedom from religious rationalism in Germany. Under the leadership of a young pastor named C.F.W. Walther, these German immigrants joined together with a number of pastors sent to America by Wilhelm Loehe in Neuendettelsau (Bavaria) to form 'The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States,'”

This brief summary in Dr. Samuel Nafzger's “Introduction to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” reminds us that our founding fathers were immigrants. Many of them came to this country to escape religious oppression with the hope of living in a land where one would have the freedom to worship according to one's convictions. Many others came to these shores to improve the economic lot of their families.

With this as part of its history, the LCMS has been sensitive to the needs of immigrants across its 159-year history. In the early decades, the LCMS welcomed many more immigrants, largely of European descent, into its congregations. In more recent times, the Synod has welcomed immigrants from all parts of the world. Through social ministry organizations and a partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), many immigrant and refugee communities have been and continue to be served. Congregations receive refugees and care for immigrants in many ways and situations. African, Asian, Hispanic, and other immigrant ministries are springing up and flourishing in our midst. The people of many nations are being welcomed in the LCMS with the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord Himself set the standard for responding to “the stranger in our midst.” Jesus Christ sought out, welcomed, and cared for people in need. He acted in mercy without respect to ethnicity, religion, or nationality. The LCMS seeks to respond in similar manner and in accord with His Word, which teaches, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). We express love toward immigrants not only as individual and corporate Christians, but also as individual and corporate citizens of this nation, which we love.

Today, issues related to immigration and immigration laws are causing distress in our land. As corporate citizens of this nation, we recognize that solutions to the problem of illegal immigration are complex. There are many factors that deserve consideration, each exhibiting its own value. Secure borders, national security, policy enforcement, national stability, inexpensive labor, decent income, budget limits, human rights, and work opportunities are only the beginning of the long list.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod affirms the right, responsibility, and authority of the government to act as God's agent, according to what is reasonable and just, in the creation and

enforcement of laws (Romans 13:1-7). It follows that we recognize and affirm the responsibility of the government to regulate immigration in a godly manner while considering the many factors that deserve careful attention.

Millions of undocumented persons have come to the United States for many and various reasons. They have come to flee oppression of many sorts, including extreme poverty and hunger. They have come in order to make provision for their loved ones. They have come in order to end separation from loved ones. They have come illegally because they have deemed that the legal route is nearly impossible to maneuver. They have come because they can work, and they find dignity in labor. We recognize also that a small percentage have come for malevolent reasons.

Christians equally committed to God's Word may reasonably arrive at different conclusions on specific aspects of these issues and their resolution. However, this much is certain: God, in His Word, consistently shows His loving concern for “the stranger in our midst” and directs His people to do the same. The Children of Israel were told, “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19). God told Moses to tell the people, “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:33-34). Jesus said, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these ... you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). We are reminded in Hebrews 13:2, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

The challenges of illegal immigration are real and solutions must be found. While we accept our Christian responsibility to care for those in need, it is not the role of the church to specify particular civil legislation, either to its own constituency or to the government. We do, however, pray that God will grant wisdom and discernment to our nation's elected leaders as they endeavor to provide appropriate solutions to this very real dilemma.

Meanwhile, in order to fulfill our Christian obligation, we also request that the charitable act of providing assistance to undocumented aliens not otherwise engaged in illegal activity not be criminalized *ipso facto*. We pray that appropriate solutions may be found, so that our assistance to those in need can also include helping persons become legal residents and citizens of this land of freedom and opportunity in which God has so richly blessed us.

Sincerely, in Christ,

Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Director
LCMS World Relief/Human Care

Document Source (April 2009):
www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=10023

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Presbyterian Policy on Immigration

The 217th General Assembly (2006) on Advocacy and Welcome for All Immigrants

The Presbyterian General Assemblies began to speak out on immigration and refugee issues when the aftermath of World War II and the partitioning of Europe displaced millions of people. This led to the 1953 PC (USA) Assembly to call for a comprehensive review of the nation's immigration policies. In 1954 the PC (USA) Assembly called for legislation to provide for needs of migrant workers who had lived and worked in the United States throughout the war, often replacing workers who were fighting and therefore unable to farm or work in manufacturing.

In subsequent years the Assemblies spoke to the problems of refugees arriving in the US from all over the world. The 1980 UPCUSA and 1982 PCUS Assemblies issued general statements on the world refugee situation and expressed support for actions in what was called the “sanctuary movement”, when thousands of Central American refugees poured into the United States fleeing from repression and human rights violations. Mexican migration continued to go unaddressed by the government and in 1981 a PC (USA) joint statement with PCUS stated “Mexican immigrants reveal again our divided mind about immigration. They are told they are needed and at the same time that they are not wanted. They are regarded both as burden and benefit. Political and geographical boundaries are in and of themselves part of the human social existence... However, the only boundaries Christians recognize ultimately are those established by justice and love.”

The 206th PC (USA) General Assembly (1994) adopted the “Call to Presbyterians to Recommit to Work and Pray for a Just and Compassionate U.S. Immigration Policy”. Again, in 1999 and 2004 Presbyterians, through General Assembly actions, guided by theological and ethical principals, continued to call for a commitment from both Presbyterians and the government to work toward welcoming immigrants into our communities and providing just laws that effect those who live and work in the United States. The need for immigration reform continues today. In 2006, the PC (USA) General Assembly again echoed what has been expressed for the last 50 years. To find out more about immigration and what is happening currently in the church go to www.pcusa.org/immigration.

- 1.** Reaffirm the 216th General Assembly (2004)'s “Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the U.S.”
- 2.** Affirm that our denomination, mindful of the current realities and threats to our belief system, not sway from our solidarity with, and pledge of service to, all of our brothers and sisters regardless of their race, creed, color, nationality, or residency status.
- 3.** Affirm those Presbyterian congregations and presbyteries that are already standing alongside immigrants and are actively engaged in acts of compassion, empowerment, and advocacy.
- 4.** Challenge each Presbyterian congregation and presbytery to embrace a comprehensive approach to “advocacy and welcome” for immigrants that includes, at the very minimum:
 - a.** an opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to this country to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria, and, over time, pursue an option to become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;

- b.** reforms in our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;
 - c.** the creation of legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected; and
 - d.** border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of identifying and preventing entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals, as well as pursuing the legitimate task of implementing American immigration policy.
 - e.** a call for living wages and safe working conditions for workers of United States-owned companies in other countries;
 - f.** a call for greater economic development in poor countries to decrease the economic desperation, which forces the division of families and migration.
- 5.** Affirm the right of each congregation, presbytery, and our denomination as a whole, to speak out clearly and constantly to the media and others regarding the PC (USA)'s call to serve all those in need and to stand with the oppressed, our refusal to be deferred from this mandate, and our willingness to break laws that forbid us to live out our responsibilities to God and to our brothers and sisters who do not have U.S. residency documents.
- 6.** Encourage legislators serving in the House and Senate to actively work across party lines to achieve legislation that is consistent with the principles stated in Recommendation 4 above.
- 7.** Affirm the PC (USA)'s commitment to providing sanctuary to anyone in need of safe space, food, or shelter.
- 8.** Advocate these positions through the Washington Office of the PC (USA) and the Office of the Stated Clerk, including amicus curiae briefs, if necessary.
- 9.** Direct the General Assembly Council, through its National Ministries Division, to create and facilitate a network of "immigrant welcome" churches that agree with the affirmations of this overture.
- 10.** Reaffirm that we must find ways to ensure that "marginalized persons" in our society, citizen or not, are not pitted against each other.
- 11.** Express our grave concern about the negative impact of the growing effort to make the border more secure through building walls designed to move migrant patterns further into the more dangerous part of the borderlands, by increasing the number of federal agents, and by deploying armed National Guard to the already volatile region.
- 12.** Commend the visionary efforts of programs such as Just Coffee, Just Trade Centers, and micro-credit programs that strengthens communities and enables people to stay in their homeland through economic development.
- 13.** Urge presbyteries to develop and implement strategies, policies, and protocols:
 - a.** to educate their congregations and membership with regard to ministries with immigrant peoples consistent with Item 10-05 ('Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States') approved by the 216th General Assembly (2004), ministries with

- i.** undocumented people,
 - ii.** asylum seekers,
 - iii.** women and children trafficked into the U.S.A.,
 - iv.** immigration detainees, and
 - v.** documented people with immigration issues;
- b.** to empower those ministries at a local and presbytery-wide level;
- c.** to encourage and support immigrant communities to organize on their own behalf relative to the list of issues in Recommendation 13.a. above.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.pcusa.org/immigration/pdf/immigration-resolution-2006.pdf

Religion Newswriters Religion Informs Immigration Debate

May 15, 2006

The debate on immigration reform has split the country, so it's no surprise that the religious community is divided over the issue as well. In this case, the clergy are divided from their flock. Across the country, Roman Catholic clergy have been fighting efforts by Congress to make it a crime to help or hide illegal immigrants. With the Catholic Church's Catechism stating that "The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin," priests and nuns believe it to be their divine duty to protect illegal immigrants.

- Priests in Chicago have held hunger strikes, and others have marched in protests across the nation, with Washington, D.C., Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick giving the opening speech at a demonstration on the National Mall in April.
- Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony has declared from the pulpit that priests in his diocese have permission to break the law if Congress makes it a crime to help illegal immigrants.
- On Good Friday, the bishops of New York State echoed the position of Catholic clergy when they declared that they wanted Congress to pass legislation that "provides for a pathway to permanent legal status for undocumented workers" and sets up "a rational and fair temporary worker program."
- That stance by Catholic Church leaders contrasts with what many lay Catholics say about the issue. When asked whether they supported or opposed amnesty for undocumented workers who are already in the country, 34 percent of Catholics said they supported it, 49 percent opposed it and 15 percent were unsure, according to an April Zogby poll. (Read an April 18, 2006, *Washington Times* story about the poll.)

A similar, if more nuanced, division is taking place among conservative Christians. Some of the most influential Christian conservative organizations in the country have remained publicly silent about the issue, even though their members seem to be speaking loud and clear.

- The Family Research Council surveyed its members in April and found that by a 9-1 ratio, they believed illegal immigrants should be "detected, arrested and returned to their country of origin." Despite that, the council has not issued a public opinion on the matter. Read an April 28, 2006, *San Francisco Chronicle* story about it.
- Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptist Convention, has endorsed a bipartisan plan in the Senate that includes a way for many illegal immigrants now living in the country to become permanent residents and eventually U.S. citizens. In an essay posted on the Baptist Press web site, Land wrote that U.S. citizens have an obligation to support the government and its laws, but he added, "As citizens of the Lord's heavenly Kingdom ... we also have a divine mandate to act redemptively and compassionately toward those who are in need."

- Christian evangelicals in favor of comprehensive immigration reform wrote a letter to President Bush and Congress. Among the signers was World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. But the NAE itself did not sign the letter because it said its members are divided on how to deal with immigration.

Why it matters

Latino immigration is transforming the United States. Both Republicans and Democrats say comprehensive immigration reform is needed soon. Increasingly, congregations and people of faith are taking a stand.

Questions for reporters

- What do employers, school officials, religious groups and social service agencies say about the impact of immigration from Mexico and Latin America on your region?
- How are congregations responding? What Spanish-language services or migrant outreach programs have been initiated?
- What stories do immigrants in your area have to tell about their journeys and their faith?

NOV. 14, 2005

UPDATED OCT. 12, 2006

UPDATED APRIL 3, 2006

UPDATED MAY 15, 2006

Document Source (April 2009):

www.religionlink.org/tip_051114a.php

Sojourners

Faith in Action -- Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Press Release (02/20/2008)

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the stranger. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you. You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform represents a coalition of Christian organizations, churches, and leaders, from across the theological and political spectrum, united in support of comprehensive Immigration reform. Despite our differences on other issues, we are working together to revive comprehensive immigration reform as soon as possible, because we share a set of common moral and theological principles that compel us to love and care for the stranger among us.

An Urgent Need for Compassionate Immigration Reform

Immigration legislation may have died in Congress last June, *but* the issue is far from dead. The current U.S. immigration system is still broken. Families are still in jeopardy, workers are still being exploited, and the border is far from secure. As Christian churches, organizations and leaders, we are more committed than ever to holding our politicians accountable to the values they profess~ values of family integrity and economic progress.

Sermon Illustration Packet on Immigration

This resource is designed to equip and inspire pastors with preaching material on the Christian teaching of hospitality and the biblical call to “welcome the stranger.” In addition to *two* full sermons, the packet features a series of sermon Illustrations, biblical stories of migration, and stories of undocumented immigrants living in our country today, to be used either in sermons focused on the call to love our neighbor, or about something else all together.

Document Sources (Winter 2008):

www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=action.display&item=CCIR_main

www.sojo.net/action/alerts/080402_Serman_Booklet.pdf

Southern Baptist Convention

Southern Baptists and Immigration Reform

The Christian Post (Christianpost.com)

Dr. Richard Land – Oct. 18, 2007

Imagine my surprise when I recently discovered that Southern Baptists had been called out in a guest editorial in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on the issue of immigration (Southern Baptists: Push immigration reform, Sept. 9, 2007).

I am happy that Sean McKenzie, author of the opinion piece, noted the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution on the crisis of illegal immigration at their annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C., in June 2006.

The resolution, among other things, called for:

- the federal government to provide for the security of our nation by controlling and securing our borders;
- the United States Congress to address seriously and swiftly the question of how to deal realistically with the immigration crisis;
- the federal government to enforce all immigration laws; and
- Christian churches to act redemptively and reach out to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of all immigrants.

It is important to note that the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the SBC's public policy and moral concerns agency, which I am privileged to serve as president, has called repeatedly for comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, I called for such comprehensive measures and laid its parameters in a first-person commentary published April 27, 2006, before the Convention acted on the matter the following June.

Sean McKenzie is incorrect to state that "Land and the Baptists sat out the debate."

As anyone who knows me will attest, I weigh my words very carefully. When I called for comprehensive immigration reform, I meant comprehensive reform. Merely calling something "comprehensive" does not make it so.

I said during the March 29, 2007, press conference (referenced by McKenzie) on this issue with Senator Edward Kennedy and others, as well as on subsequent occasions—both publicly and privately to numerous congressmen and senators and their staffs—that the comprehensive immigration reform that would garner majority support among Southern Baptists and other Evangelicals had yet to be written.

There was far more than "some particular aspect of a long and much amended bill," as McKenzie claimed, that Southern Baptists found objectionable.

I did everything I could short of running through the halls of Congress with my hair on fire to make both Houses aware of many of the problems I felt needed to be addressed in the immigration reform bill.

I believed then, and believe today, that it would have been counter-productive to make such criticisms in the media.

The fact that Sean McKenzie is not aware of our efforts does not mean they did not take place. And despite McKenzie's assertion, neither Southern Baptists nor myself are afraid to "take unpopular stands." In fact, given Southern Baptists' storied and controversial stands on biblical issues, the assertion is almost laughable.

I am more than a little disappointed that neither the author of this opinion piece nor the Atlanta Journal-Constitution made inquiries of me on this matter before rushing to print with erroneous information.

Looking back at the debate over the immigration reform measure, Senator John McCain correctly assessed the situation when he concluded that the American people simply have lost trust in their government on this issue, based on the way it has been mishandled—both by Republican and Democrat administrations.

It was simply not possible to convince the American people that the federal government was serious enough about border security and cracking down on employers who exploit illegal immigrants to go forward with a so-called comprehensive immigration reform bill that dealt with the illegal immigrants already in the U.S. in a fair and redemptive way.

The American people, many Southern Baptists included, wanted a far more tangible commitment from the government that it would take border security and enforcement more seriously first. Only then would they give their support to any plan to resolve the issues surrounding the millions of immigrants who are already in the country illegally.

Southern Baptists have a long and demonstrable track record of caring for, as Jesus said, "the least of these." We are not waiting for legislation to spark us into ministering to those in the country illegally but who have real physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Although it is our prayer that Congress would come together on a true comprehensive immigration reform package that addresses this issue in a morally responsible way, we serve a higher authority and will not be impeded in fulfilling our biblical injunction to care for those in need (Matthew 25: 34-40).

Dr. Richard Land is president of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention's official entity assigned to address social, moral, and ethical concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families and their faith.

Richard Land

Christian Post Guest Columnist

Document Source (Winter 2008)

christianpost.com/Opinion/Columns/2007/10/southern-baptists-and-immigration-reform-18/index.html Church World Service

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

The Seven Principals of Unitarian Universalism

Our Principles

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

These principles and sources of faith are the backbone of our religious community.

Document Source (April 2009):

<http://www.uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml>

The United Methodist Church Opposition to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Resolution Act

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures call us as the community of God to give shelter, protection and help to sojourners living amongst us, reminding us that we, too, were foreigners in other times; and

WHEREAS, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church through its document To Love the Sojourner has given the various boards, commissions, and agencies of The United Methodist Church direction as we relate to undocumented persons that live in our communities; and

WHEREAS, undocumented persons possess certain inalienable rights named and lifted in the International Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nations charter, as well as the documents concerning immigration of the Geneva Convention, and the Constitution of the United States Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, one of the most critical issues facing the Hispanic community today is the need for amnesty for the undocumented immigrants living within the United States; and

WHEREAS, being an undocumented person is NOT a crime;
Therefore, be it resolved, that we, The United Methodist Church, declare that the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Resolution Act* is evil and unjust, and that the enforcement thereof results in immediate and insufferable human rights violations, discrimination, and oppression.

We call the United States government to accountability and insist upon:

- 1) changes in, and possible abolition of, the 1996 immigration law;
- 2) the continued existence of a unified Immigration and Naturalization Service, rather than a division into administrative and enforcement prosecutorial branches, and
- 3) the development of an amnesty program for undocumented persons to be implemented immediately.

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference move to create a task force to be responsible for agencies working on behalf of The United Methodist Church that is composed of staff from the following church boards and agencies: General Board of Global Ministries, General Commission on Religion and Race, General Board of Church and Society, with a minimum of two bishops, legal advisers, and Methodists Associated to Represent the Cause of Hispanic Americans (MARCHA) representation.

ADOPTED 2000

From *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* — 2004.

Document Source (April 2009):

<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=4&mid=1062>

STATE AND LOCAL RELIGIOUS BODIES

Colorado Interfaith Pledge on Immigration

As Coloradans of faith, we recognize the sacred humanity of all immigrants. Our diverse faith traditions teach us to welcome our sisters and brothers with love and compassion. We affirm that public policies are moral statements. Our faith calls us to pursue policies that uphold the human dignity of each person and value the wholeness of each family unit.

Therefore: I commit to stand for America's finest ideals and core community values and publicly reject the politics of division and isolation that fan anger and hate against any person or community. I will work towards just, workable, and humane immigration reform.

Sponsoring Groups:

American Friends of Service Committee
American Jewish Committee
Anti-Defamation League
Colorado Catholic Conference
Colorado Council of Churches
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
Confianza
Greater Denver Interfaith Alliance
Greater Metro Denver Ministerial Alliance
HIS Ministries
HS Power and Light
Northeast Denver Islamic Center

Document Source (April 2009):

<http://coloradoimmigrant.org/form.php?id=52>

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington Statement On Immigration Policy

At the outset of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, G-d, through Moses and Aaron, said, "One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Exodus XII, 49).

This commandment established a precept familiar to all Western monotheistic faiths, that strangers among us should be treated with compassion and dignity and not subjected to discrimination (add language mindful of our own immigrant experience and Jewish history/ 2000 in diaspora). Drawing on this commandment – and on 350 years of Jewish experience in America, an experience that has included both refuge and exclusion, welcome and rejection, and opportunity and discrimination – in March 1995 the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington adopted a comprehensive immigration policy.

Among other points, the 1995 policy statement emphasized these fundamental principles:

- That no immigrant should be the subject of religious, racial or ethnic discrimination;
- That special favor should be shown to victims of persecution and to family reunification;
- That services such as health care, nutrition, housing and education should be made equally available to all persons legally residing in the United States;
- That the denial of services to undocumented aliens and their children, especially in the areas of health and education, would endanger public health and create an uneducated underclass; and
- That the federal government has a special responsibility to enforce existing immigration law.

This 2008 Statement of Policy considers the application of the 1995 Principles to current efforts of state and local governments to adopt and to enforce their own rules on both undocumented immigrants and those who deal with them, such as landlords, employers and charities. Although there have been a handful of recent cases upholding local ordinances that penalize employers of undocumented immigrants, the weight of judicial authority suggests that these state and local efforts are unconstitutional. Of equal importance, these state and local rules wrongly discriminate against the targeted class of immigrants and would have significant adverse effects on the public health and the public welfare.

The Constitution of the United States and two centuries of federal legislation conclusively demonstrate that only the federal government has the power to *regulate* immigration. *DeCanas v. Bica*, 424 U.S. 351, 354–55 (1976). Congress has permitted state and local governments to enforce some federal laws applicable to immigrants, subject, however, to entering into a Congressionally prescribed Memorandum of Agreement with federal authorities. See Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA). This federal statute requires any state or local immigration enforcement activity to be subject to federal training and federal supervision, and to be restricted to investigations of serious crimes specified by the federal government. See <<http://ice.gov/partners/287g/Section287-g.htm>>.

For these reasons, the state and local enactments and proposals addressed later in this statement appear to constitute defiance of federal law. The problem, moreover, is rooted in the failure of the United States Congress to legislate and the failure of the Executive Branch to enforce current law.

For over a decade, the Congress has not acted to address pressing issues created by the lack of meaningful enforcement of existing laws and the resulting massive influx of undocumented immigrants, the large majority of whom have become productive members of the U.S. work force. At the same time, Executive Branch enforcement activities have been erratic, marked by general lassitude occasionally interrupted by well-publicized “raids” on relatively small concentrations of undocumented immigrants. Fair and even-handed enforcement has been rendered difficult by the size of the undocumented community and the established importance of the undocumented immigrants to the economy. (Studies have shown that immigrants, both documented and undocumented, pay taxes and otherwise contribute to the economy to the same extent as similarly situated citizens.)

The state and local legislative proposals addressed here include:

- Directions to the local police force to seek out undocumented immigrants and to detain them for deportation by federal authorities;
- Denying health services and State university admission to children of undocumented immigrants;
- Denying other social services to undocumented immigrants even when federal law does not require the services to be withheld;
- Dissolving the corporate charter of, and criminally prosecuting, employers found to have hired undocumented immigrants;
- Withdrawing occupancy permits from, and criminally prosecuting, property owners who rent to undocumented aliens;
- Making every church or other charity seeking to help immigrants “card” each applicant for assistance and either (1) deny food, shelter or clothing to each person who cannot prove lawful presence or (2) segregate the institution’s private funds from any public funds that are received so that a poor immigrant without documents is served only with private dollars.

These actions are ill-advised in addition to being mean-spirited. In many instances, they have not only been inhumane or unlawful, but counter-productive as a matter of policy. If medical assistance is withheld from undocumented immigrants, the broader public is exposed to increased risk of infection. If the fear of deportation discourages witnesses to violent crimes from coming forward, law enforcement is impaired. The denial of higher education to talented children of undocumented immigrants diminishes the prospects of all of us for an improved life.

Some of the jurisdictions enacting legislation of the type addressed here have subsequently found the economic and financial costs of such policy reform to be significant, leading to repeal of their immigration-related legislation.

For these reasons, and in further implementation of the policies incorporated in its March 1995 Policy Statement, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington resolves:

1. The Congress of the United States and the Executive Branch should accept and perform their responsibilities to resolve the concerns and issues presented by the large number of undocumented immigrants now residing in the United States.
2. The Congress has the responsibility to reform existing law. That reform should simultaneously and comprehensively address two major concerns: (1) improvement of border security in a humane fashion; and (2) development of a program that would permit undocumented immigrants now in this country to obtain legal status in a timely manner and a reasonable and practical path to eventual citizenship.
3. The Executive Branch, in keeping with its responsibility to enforce the law, should then fairly and consistently enforce all immigration laws enacted by the Congress,
4. All governments – federal, state and local – should recognize the significant risks the types of state and local actions described above pose to the public health and welfare and to the economy of the Nation.
5. All agreements that permit state and local governments to enforce federal immigration laws should require the states and localities to enforce immigration laws in strict compliance with federal standards and to ensure mechanisms for providing safe harbors to undocumented immigrants who assist law enforcement, report abusive behavior, or who seek medical assistance.
6. Decisions by localities to authorize programs to assist job seekers, such as day labor centers or training programs, should be based on objective analysis of the contribution of such programs to public health and safety and to the local economy. Decisions to authorize or to continue such programs should not be based on whether undocumented immigrants may benefit.

Passed unanimously by the JCRC Board of Directors on 2/27/08.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.jcouncil.org/site/DocServer/immigration_policy_mark_up_2008.pdf?docID=1441

NOVA New Sanctuary Movement Memorandum

To: NOVA New Sanctuary Movement
From: Legal and Education Committee
Re: NSM goals, recent political events, NSM legal situation, and myths and facts on immigration issues
Date: October 16, 2007

“No matter what migrants' legal status is, their human dignity must be respected and their freedoms guaranteed: the right to a dignified life; to fair treatment at work; to have access to education, health and other social benefits; to grow in competence and develop humanly; (and) to freely manifest their culture and practice their religion.”

*Archbishop Agostino Marchetto
Secretary of the Pontifical Council
for Migrants and Travelers*

GOALS OF THE NEW SANCTUARY MOVEMENT

The New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) has three primary goals, none of which necessarily involve civil disobedience. A spiritual commitment to the goals of the organization would be necessary. The goals are:

- To take a united, public, moral stand for immigrant rights;
- To protect immigrants against hate, discrimination, and unjust deportation;
- To reveal the actual suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and proposed legislation to the religious community and the general public.

As you can see none of these goals involve harboring “illegal aliens” (undocumented workers).

From time to time the membership category of the NSM referred to as “Host Churches” may choose on their own volition to house a family that is in dire jeopardy of being deported unfairly or in such a way as to divide families or separate children from their parents. Even in those rare cases, the authorities are not deceived and the families are not hidden. (See legal issues.)

A non host-member congregation would help with outreach activities (providing food and clothing when called upon) and with education and advocacy. It is apparent that anti-immigration groups are spreading misinformation and outright lies regarding the impact of immigrants on economies, jobs, and crime. The NSM education process is intended to deal with that. The advocacy response is intended to offset the terrible, unfair legislation proposed locally and the failure of the federal government to act responsibly on these issues.

Over the past several months an organized attack on Latino, Muslim, and Asian immigrants has been waged, not only by hate groups such as the “Minutemen” and organizations such as “Help Save Manassas,” but also by political leaders in these jurisdictions.

As a result of these hateful attacks and the draconian nature of certain local resolutions and ordinances, families are suffering, parents are being torn apart from their children and spouses, and they are being subjected to numerous forms of violence and physical and emotional distress. We must pay attention to the underlying injustice, bigotry, and affront to our Constitution, which ultimately affect all of us.

Our faith demands that we become engaged in resolving this acute injustice. A strategy must be developed and applied, driven by a sense of urgency. Examples of the irrational and hateful events that have occurred follow.

RECENT ANTI-IMMIGRANT EVENTS

Southwest USA

Minutemen, armed and violent, force immigrants into the desert, where many die of thirst and hunger and others are shot. More than 500 workers die over each of the last two years trying to cross the U.S. desert to find work and food for their families.

Hazleton, PA

Ordinance passed which calls for penalties to anyone leasing space, hiring, or providing city services to undocumented workers. Workers are penalized and unfairly deported after profiling takes place on city streets and police are ordered to seek out undocumented immigrants. (The ordinance has since been ruled unconstitutional by federal judge, who stated that such persons have a constitutional right to such services as medical care, schools, and police protection, and that the exemption and due-process clauses of the Constitution have been violated by Hazleton).

Manassas, VA

Manassas ordinance (since repealed) called for inspections of private homes for occupancy violations, resulting in evictions of entire families.

Herndon, VA

City council elected on campaign promises to send immigrants back where they came from and not allow day laborers to seek jobs. City council also votes to ban churches from distributing food and clothing at day-laborer site.

Reston Interfaith Alliance fired from running day-laborer site for not checking green cards. Herndon writes to state attorney general complaining that Fairfax is meddling with their sovereignty and loses \$175,000 in funding from Fairfax for day-laborer site as a result. Day-laborer site closed and day laborers are threatened with arrest in other areas of the city.

After judge rules that their tactics are unconstitutional, Herndon mayor and council vow to ignore judge's ruling and instead use zoning regulations to profile ... and arrest undocumented workers. Council also votes to double the civil fine for "overcrowding" (\$2,000.00 for every ten days it occurs). They say they will seek to criminalize the practice.

Prince William County, VA

Prince William County passes resolution restricting some county services from undocumented workers and directing police, during routine police work, to arrest and detain all who can't prove they are legally in the country.

In a totally undemocratic fashion, the PWC board of supervisors takes the following actions:

- Behind closed doors the night before a public discussion on anti-immigration resolution, new language is substituted which no one has a chance to read.
- Chairman limits speakers to one minute each after most of those in favor of resolution finish their statements.
- Council ignores the testimony of the city manager, the police chief, and city attorney, who were all opposed to the resolution.
- Again behind closed doors, council votes to pass resolution restricting services and effectively directing police to profile ... and arrest immigrants.
- More recently, the chairman of the board -- without consulting the rest of board – spends \$30,000 of taxpayer money to send out notices intended to rally anti-immigration supporters to a council meeting.

Loudoun County, VA

Passes similar resolution, then abandons it after realizing it is unconstitutional -- but vows to come up with other tactics.

Press Coverage of Crime and Immigration Nationally

Any story of a crime involving an undocumented worker leads with a headline stressing that the crime has been committed by an “illegal,” even though that demographic group has a lower crime rate than almost any other.

Federal Government

House passes legislation introduced by Rep. Tom Tancredo (Colorado Republican) calling for forfeiture of federal Homeland Security funds for any local jurisdiction passing sanctuary ordinances.

Department of Homeland Security orders that list of “unmatched Social Security numbers” be distributed to all employers, who then must fire any worker who used these numbers. Federal judge finds that the list is largely inaccurate and that many U.S. citizens would be fired as a result and therefore issues an injunction against doing so.

Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani's campaign states there are too many mosques in America and police must closely monitor them.

LEGAL ISSUES FACING SANCTUARY CHURCHES

- Undocumented workers have a right to U.S. constitutional rights and protections. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled on this matter on numerous occasions.
- Providing shelter and food to undocumented workers is not a crime as long as the persons or groups providing such sanctuary do not lie about the fact that they are doing so or mislead authorities as to the whereabouts of specific individuals that they have warrants for.
- The recent Hazleton, PA., federal-court case involving an ordinance similar to the Prince William measure has been found in favor of the plaintiffs (undocumented workers). The federal judge found that the city was in violation of the Constitution in the matter of “exemption” (the local government cannot take action on matters that are federal responsibilities) and that the plaintiffs were not afforded the constitutional right to due process if found to be in violation of the ordinance.
- Legal justification for congregations participating in the New Sanctuary Movement is further discussed by the Center for Constitutional Rights in Los Angeles and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc in Washington, D.C.
- The Immigration and Nationality Act 274(a)(1)(1)(iii), 8 U.S.C. 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii)(1988) states that a person is guilty of a felony who with *knowing or in reckless disregard* of the fact that an alien has come to, entered, or remains in the U.S. in violation of the law conceals, harbors, or shields from detection or attempts to conceal, harbor or shield from detection, such alien in any place, including any building or means of transportation.
- All cases decided under U.S.C. 1324(a) involve defendants who simply kept silent about the aliens' presence, rather than individuals who have reported the aliens' presence to the INS but who have continued to shelter them. Accordingly, a congregation that houses undocumented immigrants will likely not be prosecuted unless they are attempting to conceal such aliens from Immigration and Custom Enforcement detection.
- The case of an individual charged under the USC code, which was recently discussed in the Washington Post, involved not only providing shelter and food, but included illegal-passport and gun charges.

Legal Risks in Providing Sanctuary

- 8 U.S.C. §1324 states that unless one "with knowing or in reckless disregard" "conceals, harbors or shields from detection" an undocumented person, there should not be a violation of the law.
- Violations: Large fines and 1 to 5-year prison term.
- Senate bill to exempt first-time offenders did not become law.

- 5th Circuit gave a decision that broadly construes law. U.S. v. Shum: to “substantially facilitate” means to make an alien’s illegal presence in the United States substantially “easier or less difficult.”
- Courts reflect culture and mood of the power structure.
- Many Bush-appointed officials are on the bench and interpreting laws.
- Federal and local governments are joining forces and becoming more outrageous in enforcement actions and policies.

Mitigating Legal Factors in Providing Sanctuary

- Literal reading of 8 U.S.C. does not make it a crime to provide food, shelter, and other humanitarian aid to undocumented immigrants.
- Long-standing legal precedent gives undocumented basic rights to due process and equal protection of the law.
- Many of the local measures being enacted are likely to be judged unconstitutional.
- Many local jurisdictions have resisted cooperation with the federal government in enforcing immigration laws (including Arlington).
- Law does not apply to ministers and missionaries of bona-fide religious denominations, if they have been a member of denomination for a year.
- Access to nationally known lawyers with expertise in the field.

MAKING A COMMITMENT

Since the Northern Virginia chapter has only been in existence for a few months, there is no financial commitment of congregations or individuals in the form of dues, etc. Certain volunteer outreach opportunities will be available that can be extended to congregations, and clergy may be asked to speak on occasion, again on a volunteer basis. Time commitment for congregations will initially be at least one person to attend meetings of the chapter and its committees.

Additional goals of the New Sanctuary Movement are expressed in the following pledge:

NEW SANCTUARY MOVEMENT PLEDGE

The New Sanctuary Movement is a coalition of interfaith religious leaders and participating congregations, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States.

We acknowledge that the large-scale immigration of workers and their families to the United States is a complex historical, global, and economic phenomenon that has many causes and does not lend itself to simplistic or purely reactive public policy solutions.

We stand together in our faith that everyone, regardless of national origin, has basic common rights, including but not limited to: 1) livelihood; 2) family unity; and 3) physical and emotional safety.

We witness the violation of these rights under current immigration policy, particularly in the separation of children from their parents due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers.

We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

Therefore, We Covenant To:

- *Take a public, moral stand for immigrants' rights*
- *Reveal, through education and advocacy, the actual suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and proposed legislation*
- *Protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination, and unjust deportation.*

IMMIGRATION MYTHS AND FACTS

Immigration reform is without question a volatile issue. There are many who have unknowingly bought into the lies and misrepresentations presented by nationalistic zealots and hate groups. It is the responsibility each of us to provide the truth in each and every case and to protect our neighbors who are suffering widespread abuse and live in fear and poverty.

Below are a number of facts and myths related to immigration issues, along with references and sources of information. An understanding of these basic facts and a realization that the hate groups and politicians rarely accompany their bigoted statements with factual reference should convince us that as a matter of justice we must take action to combat these xenophobic, hateful groups.

Myth: Immigrants don't pay taxes and overwhelm social services.

Fact: Immigrants pay taxes in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at local, state, and federal levels. As far as income-tax payments go, a range of studies find that immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Undocumented immigrants pay income taxes as well, as evidenced by the Social Security Administration's "suspense" file (taxes that cannot be matched to workers' names and Social Security numbers), which grew by \$20 billion over the last decade. (Source: http://www.immigrationforum.org/about/articles/tax_study.html)

Fact: Immigrants come here to work and reunite with family members. Moreover, the ratio between immigrant use of public benefits and the amount of taxes they pay is consistently favorable to the U.S. In one estimate, immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay over \$90 billion a year in taxes, and use about \$5 billion in public benefits. (Source: *Questioning Immigration Policy: Can*

We Afford to Open Our Arms? Friends Committee on National Legislation Document G-606-DOM, January 25, 1996. <http://www.fas.org/pub/gen/fcnl/immigra.html>

Fact: In addition to the consumer spending by immigrant households, immigrants and their businesses contribute \$162 billion in tax revenue to U.S. federal, state, and local governments. While it is true that immigrants remit billions of dollars a year to their home countries, this is one of the most targeted and effective forms of direct foreign investment. (Source: <http://www.cato.org/research/articles/griswold-020218.html>)

Myth: Immigrants take jobs away from Americans.

Fact: The largest wave of immigration to the U.S. since the early 1900s has coincided with our lowest national unemployment rate and fastest economic growth. Immigrant entrepreneurs create jobs for U.S. and foreign workers, and foreign-born students allow many U.S. graduate programs to keep their doors open. While there has been no comprehensive study done of immigrant-owned businesses, we have countless examples of same: in Silicon Valley, companies begun by Chinese and Indian immigrants generated more than \$19.5 billion in sales and nearly 73,000 jobs in 2000. (Source: Richard Vedder, Lowell Gallaway, and Stephen Moore, *Immigration and Unemployment: New Evidence*, Alexis de Tocqueville Institution, Arlington, Va. (Mar. 1994), p. 13.)

Myth: Immigrants are a drain on the economy.

Fact: During the 1990s, half of all new workers were foreign-born, filling gaps left by native-born workers in both the high- and low-skill ends of the spectrum. Immigrants fill jobs in key sectors, start their own businesses, and contribute to a thriving economy. The net benefit of immigration to the U.S. is nearly \$10 billion annually. As Alan Greenspan points out, 70 percent of immigrants arrive in prime working age. That means we haven't spent a penny on their education, yet they are transplanted into our workforce and will contribute \$500 billion toward Social Security over the next 20 years, while taking nothing out. (Source: Andrew Sum, Mykhaylo Trubskyy, Ishwar Khatiwada, et al., *Immigrant Workers in the New England Labor Market*, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, Prepared for the New England Regional Office, the Employment and Training Administration, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Boston, Mass., October 2002. <http://www.nupr.neu.edu/1102/immigrationPDF.search='center%20for%20labor%20market%20studies%20at%20Northeastern%20University%20studies'>)

Myth: Immigrants don't want to learn English or become Americans.

Fact: Within ten years of arrival, more than 75 percent of immigrants speak English well; moreover, demand for English classes at the adult level far exceeds supply. Greater than 33 percent of immigrants are naturalized citizens; given increased immigration in the 1990s, this figure will rise as more legal permanent residents become eligible for naturalization in the coming years. The number of immigrants naturalizing spiked sharply after two events: enactment of immigration and welfare-reform laws in 1996 and the terrorist attacks in 2001. (Source: *American Immigration Lawyers Assoc., Myths & Facts in the Immigration Debate*, <http://www.aila.org/contentViewer.aspx?bc=17,142..section4>. Source: Simon Romero and Janet Elder, *Hispanics in the US Report Optimism*, *New York Times*, (Aug. 6, 2003).

Myth: Today's immigrants are more numerous and different than those 100 years ago.

Fact: The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born now stands at 11.5 percent; in the early 20th century it was approximately 15 percent. Similar to today's immigrants, those of 100 years ago often settled in mono-ethnic neighborhoods, spoke their native languages, and built newspapers and businesses that catered to their fellow émigrés.

They also experienced the same types of discrimination that today's immigrants face, and integrated within American culture at a similar rate. If we view history objectively, we remember that every new wave of immigrants has been met with suspicion and doubt and yet, ultimately, every past wave of immigrants has been vindicated and saluted. (*Source: Census Data: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00us.pdf>, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf>*)

Myth: Most immigrants cross the border illegally.

Fact: Around 75 percent of today's immigrants have legal permanent (immigrant) visas; of the 25 percent who are undocumented, 40 percent overstayed temporary (non-immigrant) visas. Undocumented immigrants estimated to be less than 2 percent of the US population. (*Source: Department of Homeland Security <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/index.htm>.*)

Fact: From 1986 to 1998, the Border Patrol's budget increased six-fold and the number of agents stationed on our southwest border doubled to 8,500. The Border Patrol also toughened its enforcement strategy, heavily fortifying typical urban entry points and pushing migrants into dangerous desert areas in hopes of deterring crossings. Instead, the undocumented immigrant population doubled in that time frame to 8 million, despite the legalization of nearly 3 million immigrants after the enactment of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986. Insufficient legal avenues for immigrants to enter the U.S., compared with the number of jobs in need of workers, has significantly contributed to this current conundrum. (*Source: Immigration and Naturalization web site: www.ncjrs.org/ondcppubs/publications/enforce/border/ins_3.html.*)

Myth: The war on terrorism can be won by restricting immigrants.

Fact: No security expert since 9/11 has said that restrictive immigration measures would have prevented the terrorist attacks. Instead, the key is effective use of good intelligence. Most of the 9/11 hijackers were here on legal visas. Since 9/11, the myriad of measures targeting immigrants in the name of national security have netted no terrorism prosecutions. In fact, several of these measures could have the opposite effect and actually make us less safe, as targeted communities of immigrants are afraid to come forward with information. (*Source: Associated Press/Dow Jones Newswires, US Senate Subcommittee Hears Immigration Testimony, Oct. 17, 2001.*)

MORE "FACTS" THAT AREN'T FACTS

Almost every day now, it is possible to hear supposedly authoritative "facts" about illegal immigration and immigrants bandied about by politicians, major media commentators, and even allegedly objective news reporters — statistics and other assertions that paint a frightening picture of hostile, disease-carrying, highly criminal Latino "aliens" bringing economic ruin to the United States.

A case in point is the 2005 claim made by CNN's "Lou Dobbs Tonight" show that 7,000 cases of leprosy had been reported in the United States in a recent three-year period — one of the "deadly imports," in Dobbs' words, that immigration brings. In May, the night after a CBS "60 Minutes" profile of Dobbs aired, Dobbs went on the air to furiously attack Intelligence Report Editor Mark Potok, who had been quoted criticizing Dobbs' characterizations of illegal immigrants.

Christine Romans, the CNN reporter who first brought up the 7,000 figure, said she had got it from "a respected medical lawyer and medical historian" — the late Madeleine Cosman, a woman who told a 2005 nativist conference that "most" Latino immigrant men "molest girls under 12, although some specialize in boys, and some in nuns." As it turns out, officials say there are fewer than 250 new cases of leprosy each year.

These kinds of "facts" generally originate with modern nativist groups and ideologues like Cosman or even unabashedly race-based hate groups. But that has not stopped them from making their way, often by force of sheer repetition, into mainstream venues like "Lou Dobbs Tonight." In addition, it is no longer uncommon to hear false or distorted statistics and half-truths coming from groups like the Federation for American Immigration Reform and The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, and aired on innumerable radio talk shows and major cable programs like the Fox News's "The O'Reilly Factor."

This kind of mass defamation of certain immigrants is hardly a new phenomenon in American history. In earlier periods, Irish, Jewish, Catholic, Asian, and other groups were publicly vilified, often by our country's leading statesmen, as lazy, degenerate, stupid, ugly, criminal, disloyal, and more.

Today, very few of the current roster of negative stereotypes — not to mention the conspiracy theories about immigration that are also increasingly widespread — contain any truth at all. But they play to an audience that may be predisposed to believe them; in 2000, even before the current immigration debate heated up, the General Social Survey published by the National Opinion Research Center found that 73 percent of Americans felt immigrants were likely to cause crime and 60 percent believed they were likely to cost native jobs.

Today, in an even more poisonous atmosphere, millions of Americans apparently believe the lies touted by nativist extremists. What follows is an attempt to distinguish demonizing propaganda from reality.

Source: Cato Institute: Don't Blame Immigrants for Terrorism, Daniel Griswold, Assoc. Director of Cato Institutes Center for Trade Policy Studies (<http://www.cato.org/dailys/10-23-01.html>)

The Claim: Undocumented immigrants are more criminal than natives.

The Purveyors: Dan Stein, executive director of the right-wing immigration-restriction organization, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), claimed in a March 8 press release that illegal immigration poses "a real and documentable risk" to Americans. "Illegal aliens are more prone to criminal activity than the rest of the population," Stein said. Twenty-three days later, Jim Gilchrist, co-founder of the vigilante Minuteman Project, told an audience it was "okay to say 'rapist,' 'robber,' and 'murderer'" when describing "illegal aliens."

The Facts: Several studies refute the notion of relatively high criminality among Latino immigrants (the vast majority of today's immigrants). Ramiro Martinez Jr., a criminal-justice professor at Florida Atlantic University who has spent years studying homicide statistics in U.S. border cities heavily populated by Mexican-born men and women, found that the homicide rates were significantly lower for Latinos there than for other groups — even though the Latinos' poverty level was very high, while poverty and criminality are closely correlated statistically.

Criminologist Andrew Karmen, in his 2006 book, *New York Murder Mystery*, found the same trend in New York City, where the "disproportionately youthful, male, and poor immigrants" of the last two decades "were surprisingly law-abiding." Robert J. Sampson, chairman of Harvard's sociology department, reported in a 2005 article in *The American Journal of Health* that the rate of violence among Mexican Americans was significantly lower than among non-Latino white and black Americans.

The Claim: Immigrants are depressing the wages of native Americans.

The Purveyors: On his April 1, 2006, show, CNN's Lou Dobbs said that the "most authoritative" study showed that legal and illegal immigration was depressing native wages by \$200 billion a year. California nativist activist Joe Guzzardi has claimed that wages remain "stagnant" because of illegal immigrants. Similar claims have been made by almost all immigration restrictionists in recent years.

The Facts: Despite what many view as the intuitively obvious relationship of immigration to wages, the fact is that most economists have not found a significant link between rising immigration and falling wages, the exception being studies in the early 1990s that showed a slight negative effect on African-American high-school dropouts' pay. Overall, the National Academy of Sciences found in a broad look at the question in 1997, there was "only a weak relationship between native wages and the number of immigrants."

This was true for all types of native workers. The one group that did suffer were "immigrants from earlier waves, for whom the recent immigrants are close substitutes in the labor market."

More recent studies have actually found a positive effect on native wages. The Public Policy Institute of California published a study this year that found that immigrants arriving in that state between 1990 and 2004 increased native-born workers' wages by 4 percent. The benefits, attributed to immigrants generally performing complementary rather than competitive work, extended to native workers at all educational levels.

The Claim: Undocumented immigrants are "stealing" American jobs.

The Purveyors: The allegation that illegal immigrants are causing native unemployment is pervasive in the nativist movement. Terry Anderson, a black Los Angeles radio host and hard-line anti-immigration activist, for instance, told "Lou Dobbs Tonight" on Oct. 23, 2003, that legal and illegal immigration was "killing the [native-born] work force." Texas nativist leader Debbie Rawlins said in 2006 that "Hispanics" were "taking our jobs, our homes." The far-right California Coalition for Immigration Reform has a billboard on the California-Arizona border that reads, "Demand Illegal Aliens Be Deported. The Job You Save May Be Your Own."

The Facts: A 2006 Pew Hispanic Center study, "Growth in the Foreign-Born Workforce and Employment of the Native Born," found no evidence that the large increases in immigration since 1990 have led to higher unemployment among native Americans. The center examined census data on the increase in immigrants in each of the 50 states, comparing those figures to state jobless rates and participation in the labor force by the native born.

Although immigrants tended to be younger and less educated than native workers, the report found "no apparent relationship between the growth of foreign workers with less education and the employment outcome of native workers with the same level of education." These findings were in line with those of most economists, who have failed to find a link between immigration and job loss. "The big message here," said University of California economist Giovanni Peri, who conducted a similar study in California, "is there is no job loss from immigration."

The Claim: Poor immigrants cost native taxpayers a fortune in social services.

The Purveyors: Robert Rector, senior research fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, told CNN's "Lou Dobbs Tonight" on June 12, 2006, that immigrants were exponentially driving up welfare costs. "[I]f you're bringing in high-school dropouts who aren't married and have children out of wedlock, what are they going to do? They're going to be on welfare. . . . It's going to cost at least \$70 billion a year."

Heather MacDonald, a fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute and contributing editor at its City Journal, wrote in 2002 that illegal immigrants "do get welfare" based on having children who are born in this country and are therefore citizens (she did not explain how parents pulled this off). U.S. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), citing Rector, claimed this year that low-skill immigrant households were costing American taxpayers "over \$1 million per head of household."

The Facts: As a general rule, the federal government reaps a net benefit from illegal immigrants in the form of Social Security payments that the workers are never able to collect because they are not citizens; it is the states -- in terms of social services, education, and medical services -- that pay the bulk of costs associated with supporting the undocumented population.

Even so, Rector and MacDonald's claims are disputed by numerous scholars, including even MacDonald's senior colleague at the Manhattan Institute, Tamar Jacoby. Jacoby, who studies immigration extensively, told the conservative National Review that while individuals might receive more in services than they paid in taxes, "they are growing the [overall economic] pie so significantly that that cost pales in comparison."

Jacoby cited a recent study of immigrants in North Carolina that reported that over the prior 10 years, Latino immigrants had cost the state \$61 million in a variety of benefits — but were responsible for more than \$9 billion in state economic growth.

The same point was made in a 1997 National Academy of Sciences study that found "the less-educated immigrants who impose a fiscal burden are the very same immigrants who provide the economic benefit reported." A major survey of the net effects of immigration, published in 2006 in The New York Times Magazine, cited only one economist, George Borjas of Harvard, claiming a negative net effect.

Many other economists disputed Borjas. "If Mexicans were taller and whiter," University of California/Berkeley professor David Card told the magazine, "it would probably be a lot easier" for the public to accept the majority view of economists that the net effects of immigration, which is now predominantly Latino, are positive.

The Claim: Proposed immigration reform would vastly overpopulate the United States.

The Purveyors: Heritage Foundation senior fellow Robert Rector, quoted in a May 15, 2006, article on the far-right NewsMax.com web site, said that the proposed Kennedy-McCain immigration reform bill would likely result in 103 million legal immigrants in the next 20 years. He added that the maximum number in that period could reach 200 million people.

The Facts: As was quickly pointed out when Rector first made these claims, his numbers defy basic logic. His minimum figure of 103 million people is roughly equal to the entire current population of Mexico; to reach his high figure of 200 million people moving to the United States in the next 20 years, you'd have to throw in the equivalent of the current population of Central America, too.

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GOVERNMENT POLICY

Religion informs immigration debate

The debate on immigration reform has split the country, so it's no surprise that the religious community is divided over the issue as well. In this case, the clergy are divided from their flock. Across the country, Roman Catholic clergy have been fighting efforts by Congress to make it a crime to help or hide illegal immigrants. With the Catholic Church's Catechism stating that "The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin," priests and nuns believe it to be their divine duty to protect illegal immigrants.

- Priests in Chicago have held hunger strikes, and others have marched in protests across the nation, with Washington, D.C., Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick giving the opening speech at a demonstration on the National Mall in April.
- Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony has declared from the pulpit that priests in his diocese have permission to break the law if Congress makes it a crime to help illegal immigrants. On Good Friday, the bishops of New York State echoed the position of Catholic clergy when they declared that they wanted Congress to pass legislation that "provides for a pathway to permanent legal status for undocumented workers" and sets up "a rational and fair temporary worker program."
- That stance by Catholic Church leaders contrasts with what many lay Catholics say about the issue. When asked whether they supported or opposed amnesty for undocumented workers who are already in the country, 34 percent of Catholics said they supported it, 49 percent opposed it and 15 percent were unsure, according to an April Zogby poll. (Read an April 18, 2006, *Washington Times* story about the poll.)

A similar, if more nuanced, division is taking place among conservative Christians. Some of the most influential Christian conservative organizations in the country have remained publicly silent about the issue, even though their members seem to be speaking loud and clear.

- The Family Research Council surveyed its members in April and found that by a 9-1 ratio, they believed illegal immigrants should be "detected, arrested and returned to their country of origin." Despite that, the council has not issued a public opinion on the matter. Read an April 28, 2006, *San Francisco Chronicle* story about it.
- Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptist Convention, has endorsed a bipartisan plan in the Senate that includes a way for many illegal immigrants now living in the country to become permanent residents and eventually U.S. citizens. In an essay posted on the Baptist Press web site, Land wrote that U.S. citizens have an obligation to support the government and its laws, but he added, "As citizens of the Lord's heavenly Kingdom ... we also have a divine mandate to act redemptively and compassionately toward those who are in need." Christian evangelicals in favor of comprehensive immigration reform wrote a letter to President Bush and Congress. Among the signers was World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. But the NAE itself did not sign the letter because it said its members are divided on how to deal with immigration.

Why it matters

Latino immigration is transforming the United States. Both Republicans and Democrats say comprehensive immigration reform is needed soon. Increasingly, congregations and people of faith are taking a stand.

Questions for reporters

- What do employers, school officials, religious groups and social service agencies say about the impact of immigration from Mexico and Latin America on your region?
- How are congregations responding? What Spanish-language services or migrant outreach programs have been initiated?
- What stories do immigrants in your area have to tell about their journeys and their faith?

National sources

- Jeffrey S. Passel is senior research associate of the Pew Hispanic Center, which has conducted research on Latino immigration patterns and Hispanic attitudes toward immigration policy. Contact 202-419-3606, info@pewhispanic.org.
- Marshall Fitz is director of advocacy with the American Immigration Lawyers Association, which argues for "comprehensive reform that will make immigration safe, orderly, legal and controlled." It supports the McCain-Kennedy legislation, saying it "would go a long way" toward fixing problems with the current system. Contact 202-216-2437, mfitz@ail.org.
- Peggy Levitt is an associate professor and the chair of the department of sociology at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Mass., and author of *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* (2007). She is also a research fellow at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. She is the author of *The Transnational Villagers* and a co-editor of *The Changing Face of Home*. Contact 781-283-2186, plevitt@wellesley.edu.
- Ira Mehlman is media director for the Federation for American Immigration Reform and is co-founder of the American Jewish Immigration Policy Institute. FAIR advocates for changes in immigration law that would reduce the number of immigrants allowed to enter this country. Mehlman contends that Jews could face increased anti-Semitism if more immigrants are allowed into the U.S. Contact 310-821-4283, imehlman@fairus.org.
- Ernie Cortes Jr., the recipient of a MacArthur "genius" award, is on the executive team of the Industrial Areas Foundation, which engages in community organizing to encourage social change. He is widely known for developing leadership among Latino immigrant communities. Contact ecortes@industrialareasfoundation.org.
- Janet Murguia is president of the National Council of La Raza, the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. Contact her in the Washington, D.C., office, 202-785-1670. La Raza also has seven regional offices.
- Edwin I. Hernández is director of the Center for Study of Latino Religion at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Ind. The center conducts social-scientific study of the U.S. Latino church, its leadership and the interaction between religion and community. Contact 574-631-8558, ehernan5@nd.edu.

- Ian F. Haney Lopez is professor of law at the University of California-Berkeley School of Law. An expert on race relations and law, he is the author of *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice* (Belknap/Harvard, 2003). Contact 510-643-2669, ian.haneylopez@law.berkeley.edu.
- Gaston Espinosa, assistant professor of philosophy/religious studies at Claremont McKenna College in California, specializes in Latino religion and politics. Contact gaston.espinosa@claremontmckenna.edu.

RELIGIOUS

CATHOLIC

- Virgilio Elizondo is a visiting professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and founder of the Mexican-American Cultural Center in San Antonio. He is widely considered the "father of Hispanic theology" and frequently comments on the intersection of Latino culture and religion. Contact 574-631-4741, Virgilio.P.Elizondo.2@nd.edu.
- Kevin Appleby is director of the Office of Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which works with both grass-roots Catholic groups and the bishops to advocate for immigration reform. Contact 202-541-3065, kappleby@usccb.org.
- Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz is professor of ethics and theology at Drew University in New Jersey. She is a leading voice in the area of mujerista theology, Latinas and justice issues. Contact 973-408-3269, aisasidi@drew.edu.
- The Rev. Allan Figueroa Deck is president of the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, Calif. He has commented on the importance of Hispanics to the Catholic Church in the United States. Contact 714-997-9587, afdecksj@loyolainstitute.org.
- William Donohue is president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. He has said that if the Catholic Church wants to restore its credibility in the U.S., particularly among Latinos, it needs to speak out on issues such as immigration. Contact 212-371-3191, cl@catholicleague.org.

EVANGELICAL

- Amy Bliss is immigration legal services attorney for World Relief, the development arm of the National Association of Evangelicals. World Relief is involved with refugee resettlement and supports the Interfaith Statement in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Contact 443-451-1992, abliss@wr.org.
- The Rev. Richard Cizik is vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals. Although the group's humanitarian arm, World Relief, signed a letter asking President Bush and Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that allows immigrants more avenues to become citizens or permanent residents, the NAE itself did not sign the letter. Contact 202-789-1011, rcizik@aol.com.
- The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez of Sacramento, Calif., is head of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. He has criticized conservative evangelicals who have spoken against or have remained silent on immigration. Contact 916-919-7476, hispanicchurch@aol.com.
- Richard Land is president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Contact Kerry Bural, 615-782-8419, kbural@erlc.com.

- James C. Dobson is founder, former president and chairman of the board for the conservative group Focus on the Family. It has not taken a stance on immigration. Contact Christopher Norfleet, 719-548-4570, culturalissues@family.org.
- Jim Backlin is director of legislative affairs for the Christian Coalition. He has said that respecting the nation's borders is a biblical principle. Contact Michele Ammons, 202-479-6900, michele@cc.org.

MAINLINE PROTESTANT

- Rick Ufford-Chase is moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a Presbyterian mission co-worker. He is a founder of BorderLinks, a not-for-profit, faith-based group that offers travel seminars - a firsthand "immersion experience" - for people wanting to understand U.S.-Mexico border issues. Contact 502-314-2266, ga_mod@ctr.pcusa.org.
- C. Richard Parkins is director of Episcopal Migration Ministries. He says the Episcopal Church supports immigration reform which recognizes that many immigrants enter the United States because they need to support their families - and says a system that punishes them for doing so without acknowledging the U.S. relies on such workers is seriously flawed. Contact 800-334-7626 ext. 6252, rparkins@episcopalchurch.org.
- Ralston Deffenbaugh is president of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, an organization that serves both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It helps resettle refugees, protect unaccompanied refugee children, advocate for the just treatment of asylum seekers and seek alternatives to detention for those incarcerated during immigration proceedings. He signed a statement on immigration legislation along with ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and 80 other Lutheran bishops. Contact him in Baltimore at 410-230-2700.

JEWISH

- Gideon Aronoff is vice president for government relations and public policy of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which supports immigration reform because of Jewish religious and ethical principles. Aronoff has said that some of the same arguments used against Latino immigrants today - for example, that they're un-American - have historically been used against Jews. Contact 202-828-5115, Gideon.aronoff@hias.org.

QUAKER

- Camilo Perez-Bustillo is migration and mobility goal director for Project Voice, the immigrant rights program of the American Friends Service Committee. Contact 215-241-7529, Cperez-Bustillo@afsc.org.

HINDU

- Dr. Aseem Shukla is a urologist and a member of the board of directors of the Hindu American Foundation, a human rights group that says it favors a more humane immigration policy. Contact 904-424-9442, aseem.shukla@hinduamericanfoundation.org.

SOURCES ON STUDENT PROTESTS

- The Raise Your Voice Campaign is an initiative of Campus Compact, a national coalition of more than 950 college and university presidents representing some 5 million students and dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement and service learning in higher education. The campaign has connected more than 300,000 students across the country on more than 450 campuses to support student civic engagement and address public issues. The campaign web site provides a history of student activism in the United States, as well as links to more information. Contact Allison Treppa, assistant director for student engagement, 517-492-2424.
- Youth Activism is a project from the Social Science Research Council that seeks to foster discussion, debate and analysis on young people as civic and political players. Contact 212-377-2700.
- The Campus Antiwar Network provides information on antiwar movements at colleges across the nation. National Coordinating Committee members are listed for regions across the country, along with contact information.
- Matthew Lassiter is an assistant professor of history at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Contact 734-647-4618, mlassite@umich.edu.
- Mark Boren is an assistant professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He wrote *Student Resistance: a History of the Unruly Subject* (Routledge, 2001). Contact 910-962-7545, borenm@uncw.edu.
- Paul Ortiz is an associate professor of community studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he teaches a course on the history of community and student activism. Contact 831-459-5583, portiz@ucsc.edu.
- Pamela Perry is an assistant professor of community studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she specializes in youth activism and youth and social movements. Contact 831-459-5036, pperry@ucsc.edu.
- Africana Online provides a history of black student protests during the civil rights era.
- The University at Albany's Journal for Multimedia History has an article on the documentary *Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, which chronicles the Chicano movement of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Background

LEGISLATION

- The U.S. Catholic Bishops sent a letter to President Bush on Oct. 11, 2006, asking him to veto the Secure Fence Act of 2006.
- Read the letter several evangelical groups and individuals wrote to President Bush and Congress urging them to pass comprehensive immigration reform.
- In December 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an immigration bill known as H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, sponsored by Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, a Republican from Wisconsin. That legislation is now being considered by the U.S. Senate.
- In May 2005, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 (enter S 1033 in the search field) was introduced in Congress - a bipartisan effort at comprehensive immigration reform that's being supported by many religious groups involved in immigration-related

advocacy. The legislation would make provisions, among other things, for admitting temporary workers into the country, tightening security along U.S. borders, providing a path to citizenship for some undocumented workers and reuniting families.

- Read a May 13, 2005, *Washington Post* story. Its sponsors in the Senate are John McCain, R-Ariz., and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and in the House of Representatives, Rep. Jim Kolbe and Jeff Flake, both Arizona Republicans, and Luis Gutierrez, a Democrat from Illinois.
- On July 20, 2005, Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., introduced the Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act (enter S 1438 in the search field). Its sponsors say it would strengthen border security and enforcement of immigration laws. It would require undocumented immigrants already in the United States to leave before they would be eligible to receive visas for temporary work.
- The National Immigration Forum posts a chart comparing the two bills and tracks the status of legislation.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

- Read a Jan. 14, 2007, Cox News Service article about the formation of Families First on Immigration, formed in part by religious conservatives.
- On Dec. 30, 2005, Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles sent President Bush a letter arguing that "our golden rule has always been to serve people in need - not to verify beforehand their immigration status." Read a March 1, 2006, story from the *Los Angeles Times* explaining Mahony's views, and a March 2, 2006, account of Mahoney's Ash Wednesday homily.
- In May 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced a campaign for immigration reform called "Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope," saying the U.S. immigration system is broken. The campaign is supported by 20 Catholic organizations with national networks. In January 2003, the bishops from the U.S. and Mexico issued a pastoral letter (also posted in Spanish) regarding migration.
- On Oct. 14, 2005, a large coalition of faith-based and community groups issued an "Interfaith Statement in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform." It calls for border protection policies "consistent with humanitarian values" and a chance for immigrants already in the United States to become legal residents. The statement's supporters include national Jewish, Christian and Muslim groups, along with local groups from Benedictine monks to Buddhists.
- World Relief, the development arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, is involved with refugee resettlement and supports the Interfaith Statement on immigration reform.
- On April 21, 2005, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, was among those signing a letter urging defeat of the REAL ID Act of 2005, arguing that the legislation - which ultimately passed - would make it harder for asylum seekers and refugees fleeing persecution. Land told *Christianity Today* that immigration is the most difficult issue to predict where evangelicals will take a stand.
- More than a dozen national Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith International and the Anti-Defamation League, along with many local groups, have endorsed a statement called "A Jewish Vision for the Future of American Immigration and Refugee Policy," issued in July 2005. It states that the United States shouldn't place limits on immigration "because of exaggerated fears that today's immigrants will not become productive and patriotic Americans."
- In June 2005, the executive council of Episcopal Migration Ministries approved a resolution expressing concern about "serious flaws" in the U.S. immigration system and supporting

legislation that would, among other things, reunite families and permit undocumented workers now in the country to pursue legal residency.

- The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a statement on immigration in November 1998. It recalls the church's tradition of showing hospitality for the uprooted and vulnerable and calls for advocacy to produce just immigration laws.
- African-American denominations have generally not been outspoken leaders in the debate on immigration reform. Read a Sept. 29, 2005, story by Newhouse News Service about the impact immigration reform has had on African-Americans. Read about involvement of African-Americans in the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride from 2003, an effort to promote immigrant rights based on the 1961 Freedom Rides of the civil rights movement.

POLLS AND SURVEYS

- A variety of polls on immigration can be found on the Polling Report's web site.
- Read an April 26, 2006, analysis, "Attitudes Toward Immigration: In the Pulpit and the Pew," from the Pew Research Center.
- Read the March 30, 2006, report, "America's Immigration Quandary," released by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Pew Hispanic Center, an extensive national survey on immigration issues, including surveys of Phoenix, Las Vegas, Chicago, Raleigh-Durham and Washington, D.C.
- A poll released March 28, 2006 by New America Media found that a majority of legal immigrants believed illegal immigrants were mostly taking jobs that other people didn't want to do. The telephone poll, conducted by Bendixen & Associates in a variety of languages between Feb. 21 and March 21, 2006, found the legal immigrants considered anti-immigrant sentiment to be on the rise.
- A CBS News poll released Oct. 24, 2005, found that three in four Americans say the United States isn't doing enough to keep illegal immigrants from entering the country. Nearly half of conservatives disagree with President Bush's handling of immigration, as do 47 percent of white evangelicals.
- The Pew Hispanic Center released a survey on Aug. 16, 2005, showing that relatively few Hispanics favor increasing legal immigration - but that four of 10 adults in the Mexican population would migrate to the United States if they could. An earlier Pew Hispanic Center survey, from March 2, 2005, reported the results of interviews with nearly 5,000 migrants from Mexico. It found that most preferred to remain in the United States but would agree to participate in a temporary worker program.
- A 2000 poll by the Hispanic Churches in American Public Life project found that 74 percent of Latinos want their churches or religious organizations to assist undocumented immigrants even when doing so is illegal, and 61 percent said immigrants who arrive illegally in the United States should be eligible for government assistance.

ARTICLES

- Read an April 11, 2006, Religion News Service article on Beliefnet that looks at how religious leaders are joining immigration protests.
- Read an April 5, 2006, *Washington Post* article on the split among evangelicals over immigration.

- Read an April 2, 2006, *Washington Post* article on Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony's fight for immigration rights.
- Read a March 30, 2006, *Wall Street Journal* article on the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life web site on how the immigration issue is splitting evangelicals.
- Read a March 19, 2006, *New York Times* story about differences over immigration policy between evangelicals and Catholics.
- Read a March 14, 2006, *Christian Science Monitor* story about the involvement of religious leaders in the immigration debate and the willingness of some to consider civil disobedience.
- Read a March 2, 2006 article from *Christianity Today* explaining how Hispanic churches in Southern California work with undocumented immigrants.
- Listen to a March 5, 2006, NPR interview with Kevin Appleby, director of migration and refugee policy for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in which he describes immigration policy as a humanitarian and moral issue and said, "In the face of the stranger we see the face of Christ."
- Read a March 1, 2006, *Chicago Tribune* article on how Catholic priests are fighting for immigrants' rights. The article is posted on the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights web site.
- Read a January 2006 *Christianity Today* article looking at why some conservative evangelical groups are keeping quiet on the immigration issue.
- Read a Jan. 1, 2006, story from Religion News Service, posted on the *Christianity Today* website, about the reluctance of evangelicals to enter the immigration debate.
- Read an Oct. 1, 2005, *National Journal* story that describes how immigration has become a "red-hot" political issue that is creating pressure, particularly in the Republican Party, for immigration reform. The story is posted by the National Immigration Forum.
- Read a September 2005 Stateline.org story, posted by the *Arizona Capitol Times*, about legislation that states are passing or considering involving immigration.
- Read a Sept. 12, 2005, *Washington Post* story about illegal immigration becoming a growing concern for voters in Virginia and elsewhere around the country.
- Read a Sept. 7, 2005, *Washington Post* story about the cost of illegal immigration to border states.
- Read an Aug. 30, 2005, Associated Press story on the *USA Today* site about the governors of New Mexico and Arizona, both Democrats, declaring states of emergency because of crime and other problems illegal immigration is causing.
- On Aug. 29, 2005, a group of religious leaders traveled from Tucson to Nogales, Mexico, for an "Interfaith Border Witness" event calling for humanitarian immigration reform. The event was organized by David Elcott, director of interreligious affairs at the American Jewish Committee in New York, and Rick Ufford-Chase, moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). Read an account from the Sept. 9, 2005, *Arizona Jewish Post*.
- Read an Aug. 12, 2005, *Wall Street Journal* story about faith groups, including Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians, supporting immigration reform.
- Read an Aug. 10, 2005, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* story about how immigration is creating a difference of views between some evangelical Hispanic pastors and conservative Republicans.
- Read a story posted by ChristianityToday.com on Jan. 20, 2005, which says the politics of immigration threatens the unity of Christian conservatives.
- Read an article from the January-February 2005 *Washington Monthly* about the impact of illegal immigration in America's heartland.

- Read the transcript of a Nov. 14, 2003, Religion & Ethics Newsweekly program on immigration.
- Read an August 10, 2004 *Christian Century* article posted on the religion-online site looking at the involvement of religious and humanitarian groups in trying to prevent deaths in the desert.
- Read a March 15, 2004, *Business Week* story about the "Hispanicizing of America." National Public Radio's 2004 series on Immigration in America includes a segment on "Faith and Assimilation."

Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

IMMIGRATION
FAITH GROUP POLICY POSITIONS
COMPILED BY ALI FARUK, POLICY ANALYST
AUGUST 2008

Summary.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- reflect on immigrant issues
- advocate for legislation that upholds the human dignity of immigrants
- provide hospitality to immigrants

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- denounce the raids on undocumented workers
- support and designate monies for faith-based agencies serving undocumented immigrants
- listen to the voices of immigrants and pray for immigrant issues
- collaborate with other faith-based agencies to protect undocumented immigrants, including the use and support of sanctuaries in congregations

Episcopal Church

- denounce raids of undocumented immigrants
- educate the Church regarding immigrant and migrant issues
- help undocumented immigrants avoid deportation by connecting them with necessary resources to stay in the country
- “enforcement of border should be proportional and humane”
- family members of legal residents should be allowed to reunite without delay

Jewish Community Council

- support a liberal immigration policy, especially in regards to family unification
- support social service availability for all legal immigrants and refugees
- advocate for humane efforts to decrease the flow of illegal immigrants into the United States
- denounce legislative efforts to implement mandatory national worker identification cards
- advocate for federal impact aid to reduce financial burden of local economies absorbing illegal immigrants
- support and encourage education that promotes tolerance for all peoples

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

- advocate the establishment of a legalization process for undocumented workers in the United States
- focus special attention to family reunification
- denounce exploitation of workers
- work towards a legalization process alongside interfaith and secular institutions
- inform individuals in power of the Presbyterian Church’s resolutions

Roman Catholic Church (from Catholic Charities)

- Catholic social teaching affirms the humanity and value of all peoples, regardless of citizenship
- if individuals cannot obtain the things they need for “genuine human life” in their home country, they should be able to obtain it elsewhere
- work to expand immigration quotas
- advocate for an earned path for illegal immigrants to obtain citizenship through work

United Church of Christ

- support and encourage human rights issues internationally as to ease migration pressure
- promote peaceful, non-violent resolution
- the U.S. and the media should portray realities immigrants face

United Methodist Church

- support and encourage stability and justice in all communities to ease migration pressures
- monitor legislation to help ensure that it is just for all peoples
- ensure protection of basic human rights for all people, regardless of documented status
- work to eradicate and prevent racism and xenophobia
- educate the public and Methodist churches concerning immigrant issues
- continue making new resolutions concerning immigrant issues

Full Text.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

“WHEREAS, immigration has played a major role in the development of our countries and the advancement of our economies; and

WHEREAS, immigration is often a desperate means of survival forced on people by poverty or persecution; and

WHEREAS, Canada and the United States are rich nations in comparison to many other countries around the world, whose citizens are seeking a better life; and

WHEREAS, scripture shows us that we are all neighbors in this world, who are called to reach out in hospitality to each other; and

WHEREAS, many of our new Disciples congregations are immigrant churches; and

WHEREAS, the United States is currently engaged in a political struggle over proposed immigration reform legislation; and

WHEREAS, immigrants cannot put their needs on hold until just, humane and compassionate legislation is passed;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon all Disciples members, congregations, regions, and general ministries to, from a faith perspective with intentionality:

1. Reflect on current immigration issues;
2. Embrace and form relationships with immigrants, especially Disciples immigrant congregations;

3. Advocate immigration reform legislation that is just, humane and compassionate; and
4. Provide hospitality that meets the needs of our immigrant neighbors in the areas of food, clothing, housing, healthcare, education, employment, legal assistance, and refuge; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly affirms its support of the daily efforts to welcome our new neighbors that are taking place in many congregations and regions and by the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries in Texas, Humane Borders in Arizona, the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, the Office of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, the New Church Ministry

Team of Church Extension, and Refugee and Immigration Ministries of Disciples Home Missions.”

-2007 General Assembly Resolution

Episcopal Church

“Resolved that The Episcopal Church deplors raids carried out by the Immigration Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) at work sites, community gatherings, and residences seeking undocumented workers, which result in separating families and leaving children parentless, and be it further

Resolved that concerted effort be made to educate all levels and sectors of the Church to the plight of refugees, immigrants and migrants, the need to offer them Christian hospitality and to continue advocacy throughout the Church on behalf of immigration legislation which adheres to the principles espoused by the Church in resolution A017 (attached) adopted by General Convention, and be it further

Resolved that The Episcopal Church encourages Episcopal clergy and lay persons to assist those seeking protection from deportation and detention by the provision of sanctuary which can include material, legal, and pastoral support, and be it further

Resolved that The Episcopal Church urges those considering such action do so after careful consideration and consultation with local experts on the legal implications of such actions.”

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church receive “The Alien Among You” in the Blue Book Report of the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns; and, while recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders, adopt the following fundamental principles included in “The Alien Among You” as the policy of the Episcopal Church.

1. Undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency.
2. Legal workers should be allowed to enter the United States to respond to recognized labor force needs.
3. Close family members should be allowed to reunite without undue delay with individuals lawfully present in the United States.
4. Fundamental U.S. principles of legal due process should be granted all persons.
5. Enforcement of national borders and immigration policies should be proportional and humane.

And be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of

the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work, and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church undertake a campaign to educate Episcopalians as to the plight of refugees, immigrants, and migrants, which will include information about the root causes of migration, and be it further

Resolved, That this campaign call the church to commit to welcoming strangers as a matter of Christian responsibility, to advocate for their wellbeing and protection and to urge its members to resist legislation and actions which violate our fundamental beliefs as Christians, including the criminalization of persons providing humanitarian assistance to migrants.”

-Resolution of the 75th General Convention

Evangelical Lutheran Church

“RESOLVED, that the office of the bishop denounce and demand that the raids, deportations, and massive firings of undocumented workers cease immediately....

RESOLVED, that the bishop encourage Lutheran agencies, congregations, and committees to designate grants that will create or support faith-based institutions that are currently serving the undocumented immigrants within the United States, who are currently being defrauded by unscrupulous and untrustworthy organizations that profit at their expense; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop meet with grass-roots leaders involved in immigration issues to listen to their concerns and pray for members who are confronting deportation proceedings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop and synod office make available the “New Sanctuary Movement Statement of Support and Involvement” to congregations and that the Synod Council consider adopting this statement at the 2008 Synod Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the presiding bishop provide for an urgent national meeting with church workers, lawyers, and theologians to establish strategies for accompanying undocumented immigrants, including the establishment and support of sanctuaries in congregations.”

-2007 Pre-Assembly Report- Reports of the Memorials Committee, p.33-34

Jewish Community Council

The organized Jewish Community has long supported a generous immigration policy in light of the modern Jewish historical experience and the belief that an open, pluralistic society benefits all.

The immigration debate has gathered considerable momentum and reached the forefront of the legislative agenda, both on the federal and state levels. The Jewish community has a significant stake in the debate and thus has a responsibility to carefully consider the issue. The Council, in its evaluations of the issue, cites the following issues of concern:

- definition of refugee status and number of available slots for refugees
- competition for social service resources and employment
- scapegoating of immigrants/increase in discrimination

In light of such concerns, the Jewish Community Council endorses the following principles:

6. The Council supports a policy of liberal immigration, particularly with respect to family reunification and acceptance of refugees fleeing from persecution. The Council opposes any efforts to reduce legal immigration from current levels or to reduce access to the United States by legitimate refugees as defined by U.S. and international law.
7. The Council supports maintaining eligibility of social services and benefits for legal immigrants and refugees. Currently, there are a variety of programs, such as health care, nutrition and housing, that benefit immigrant and refugees, including seniors and children, legally residing in the U.S. The Council opposes restricting such programs solely to U.S. citizens.
8. The Council supports humane efforts to reduce the flow of illegal immigrants into the United States. The Council also supports stronger enforcement of existing immigration law, particularly as such laws apply to immigrants with expired visas. The Council supports increasing resources and efforts aimed at reducing the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S., such as increased border patrols and better enforcement of employer sanction laws. Legislation of questionable constitutionality has been proposed that would greatly reduce or eliminate social services benefits to illegal immigrants, especially in the areas of health and education. The Council opposes legislation that would deny health and education benefits to illegal immigrants, and their children, for such legislation would surely backfire by endangering public health and creating an illiterate class. The Council opposes a national worker identification or national identification card. The Council has grave concerns that such a system would be extremely error-prone and, moreover, would create unwarranted suspicion against anyone with an accent or who appears to be from a different country. Such a system would be divisive and encourage anti-immigrant sentiment and nativism.
9. The Council urges the federal government to provide impact aid to reduce the financial burden of absorbing immigrants, disproportionately borne by certain state and local governments.
10. The Council supports educational programs that foster tolerance and understanding of immigrant populations and that separate myth from reality regarding the impact of immigration on jobs and social services. Programs that provide education for immigrants and promote U.S. Citizenship should be strengthened as well.

Approved by the Board of Directors

March 8, 1995

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) do the following:

1. Approve the Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States, and call upon the members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its governing bodies to take the following actions:
 - a. Advocate the establishment by law of a comprehensive legalization program for undocumented persons already living and working in the United States.

- b. Advocate the reform of current immigration policies and procedures to ensure a more timely and humane process, with special attention to family reunification and to those persons who have been waiting for their immigrant visas and for naturalization.
- c. Adamantly oppose the exploitation of any and all workers as a violation of the humane and just treatment due to all children of God.
- d. Join with interfaith and secular organizations that are working for comprehensive legalization.
- e. Direct the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) to communicate the above actions to the president of the United States, members of the United States Congress, the United States Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS), and the national and international ecumenical organizations to which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) relates.

-Resolution from the 216th General Assembly

Roman Catholic Church (from Catholic Charities)

“Just and fair comprehensive immigration policies addressing the needs of newcomers – as well as the security and economic health of our nation – should be a priority as Congress seeks to reform our nation’s immigration laws. The position of Catholic Charities USA, in support of just and fair comprehensive immigration reform, is rooted in Catholic social teaching, the Church’s history of migration, and our local agencies’ experiences in providing services to nearly half a million immigrants.

Our history as a faith community has been as an immigrant church in an immigrant nation. The Church has a history of migration. Jesus himself was a migrant – born in a manger on a journey, he and his family fled to Egypt, and in his ministry he had “nowhere to lay his head.” (Mt. 8:20). Jesus taught us to look for Him in the faces of migrants and to welcome the stranger. Our history as a faith community has been as an immigrant church in an immigrant nation. By 1920, immigrants constituted 75% of Catholics in the United States. In response, the Church created and expanded ministries to meet the needs of this immigrant population.

Catholic Social Teaching calls us to seek justice for newcomers. Catholic tradition recognizes that each of us has rights and responsibilities that stem from our inherent dignity as human beings created in God’s image. Citizenship does not confer rights, personhood does. These rights assume “all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life,” including food, clothing, housing, and the right to set up a family and to do productive work. A person who cannot realize the basic needs for a dignified life in his home country has the right to migrate to achieve them.

The Church further teaches that government exists, “not to confine its people within the boundaries of their nation, but to protect, above all else, the common good of the entire human family” (Pope John XXIII, 1963). The Church recognizes a nation’s right to control its borders to further the common good. Yet, the common good is not served when policies and laws violate rights of the individual.

Finally, the Church calls for a “preferential option for the poor.” We must evaluate our society’s policies based on how they impact the poor. In response to the poverty and persecution in sending countries, we in the United States must welcome these strangers whenever possible and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters as Jesus did.

Current Issues and Challenges

Our current immigration system is broken and ineffective. Despite huge investment in border enforcement, totaling nearly \$25 billion since 1993, the number of undocumented immigrants living and working in the country tripled in the same time period to between 11 and 12 million. Harsher border protections have not only failed to stem illegal immigration, but have also contributed to a rising number of border crossing deaths. More than 2,700 migrants have died in the Southwest during the past 15 years (USCCB).

Catholic Charities USA, along with other advocates, employers and legislators, is pushing for comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) that would halt illegal immigration and reduce pressure on border enforcement by expanding current immigration quotas, speeding reunification of family members and creating a temporary worker program that better responds to the real need for labor here in the United States. Advocates for CIR also seek an earned path to legalization and citizenship for the nearly 12 million undocumented workers in the country, many of whom are married to legal residents and citizens or whose children who are citizens.

Catholic Charities USA's Position

Our Catholic social teaching and Scripture emphasizes the dignity and rights of the human person, the preferential option for the poor, and the need to welcome strangers. We believe that all immigrants are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity. To this end, CCUSA promotes legislative reforms to restore federal benefits to legal immigrants, increase admission of refugees and asylees, and allow immigrants to reunite with their families sooner and more easily. Legislation should restore the legal protection of due process for immigrants and improve protections for immigrants under existing federal laws, including labor laws. CCUSA also advocates for fair and just comprehensive reform of our immigration system that expands legal avenues for necessary workers to join and strengthen our communities, and creates opportunities for undocumented workers to earn permanent legal status through their labor.”

-“*Immigration Issues,*” www.catholiccharitiesusa.org, retrieved Sept. 19, 2007

The United Church of Christ

“The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the global character of immigration issues and supports a policy of equity and justice for citizens of sending and receiving countries. Therefore, to a greater degree than at present:

- a. The United States should encourage and support movements for human rights in all nations, thus reducing the pressures on persons to migrate.
- b. The United States should promote peaceful resolution of conflict, reduce exporting of weapons, and encourage other nations to do the same.
- c. The United States should encourage other nations to shelter refugees and provide assistance to those who do in addition to continuing and expanding support of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- d. The United States should encourage economic and social development which will reduce pressures to migrate, through the use of economic aid, appropriate to developing countries, responsible private investment, and suitable technologies. Particular attention should be given to cooperative development with neighboring countries.

e. The United States, its governmental agencies, and the media should take care to portray the realities facing immigrants including shortage of housing, the lack of employment, and prejudice to outsiders. Economic and social benefits may also be unattainable.”

-Justice in Immigration. A Pronouncement of the 13th General Synod

United Methodist Church

“*Therefore*, we call upon The United Methodist Church, in collaboration with other ecumenical and interdenominational organizations, to urge the government of the United States as well as all other governments:

1. to encourage and support international economic policies that promote sustainable development and that use capital, technology, labor, and land in a manner that gives priority to employment for all people and the production of basic human necessities, thereby reducing migration pressures;
2. to alleviate conditions of uprootedness by working toward the elimination of all forms of warfare and by supporting agrarian reform, social justice, and an adequate measure of economic security for all peoples;
3. to take decisive action to eliminate the sale and international trade in land mines and provide technical assistance to facilitate their removal from lands to which refugees are returning;
4. to withhold all support—military and financial—to governments with a documented recent history of abuses and disregard for human rights, particularly the right of asylum;
5. to provide a fair and generous resettlement policy as one of the ways of ensuring meaningful protection and a durable solution for refugees;
6. to adopt reasonable standards for consideration as refugees for those seeking asylum and to prevent and/or eliminate within the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Bureau for Customs and Border Control, and the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigrant Services of the Department of Homeland Security all abuses of civil and human rights, including such practices as the violation of due process, denial of bond, detention of noncriminal asylum seekers, and hasty deportation of people who are undocumented or overstayed;
7. to insure that the rights and dignity of all immigrants and foreign visitors are fully respected in all national security measures developed to combat terrorism, and to end Special Registration requirements;
8. to monitor all attempted reforms on immigration and refugee policy and practices in order to ensure fair and adequate process in regard to asylum petitions, judicial review, refugee resettlement priorities, and immigrant categories;
9. to review and reject all legislative measures that propose summary exclusion for *bona fide* asylum seekers, to end the practice of detaining asylum seekers during the asylum process, and to ensure access to counsel and meaningful review of asylum claims by an immigration judge; and
10. to ensure protection of the basic human rights of immigrants and refugees, such as the right to an education, adequate health care, due process and redress of law, protection against social and economic exploitation, the right to a cultural and social identity, and access to the social and economic life of the nation whether in documented or undocumented status.

As people of faith, we are called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). We must work for justice and peace for all people and envision a world where institutions are transformed into true servants of the people, full of the compassion exemplified by Jesus Christ. Therefore, in addition to advocating for the above measures, we call upon United Methodist churches and agencies:

1. to support international efforts to promote sustainable development policies designed to alleviate human suffering and counteract some of the root causes of forced migration;
2. to advocate for protection of uprooted women and children against all forms of violence and to call for full legal protection of uprooted children in the midst of armed conflict;
3. to provide assistance for projects of relief to refugees and displaced persons;
4. to provide assistance for projects of economic development for refugees and returnees;
5. to provide sponsorships for refugees through local congregations;
6. to denounce and oppose the rise of xenophobic and racist reactions against newcomers in the United States and elsewhere, and to support any and all efforts to build bridges between people of diverse ethnicities and cultures;
7. to denounce and oppose government policies that use the threat of terror to target people who are in violation of minor immigration regulations, and criminalizes them as threats to national security—actions which amount to racial and ethnic profiling;
8. to continue to work with community-based organizations to provide forums for citizens to voice concerns, educate one another, and confront the problems of racism and xenophobia as obstacles to building community;
9. to work with civic and legal organizations to support communities that are now or will be affected by harsh immigration laws passed since 1996 and the heavy-handed national security measures such as the U.S.A. PATRIOT ACT of 2001;
10. to provide pastoral care and crisis intervention to individuals and families who are refugees and asylum seekers; and
11. to speak out, make declarations, and adopt resolutions to condemn and delegitimize violence against foreigners.

We recommend that the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries:

1. monitor cases of possible human-rights violations in the area of immigration and give guidance to United Methodists in responding to such cases;
2. advocate for human rights (including political, economic, and civil) for all people, and especially for the strangers who sojourn in the land;
3. advocate for repeal of the harsh provisions of the immigration laws and policies passed since 1996;
4. continue explorations of solutions to the problems of asylum seekers and undocumented people;
5. lead United Methodists throughout the United States in the fight against nativism and continue to respond to the current threat against refugees and immigrants;
6. lead the churches throughout the United States and the world in recognizing the contributions

newcomers have made that have culturally and economically enriched that nation;

7. provide technical and financial assistance to local churches in active ministry with refugees and asylum seekers;

8. continue the task of educating United Methodists about issues related to refugees, immigrants, and migrants;

9. develop materials to educate churches on immigration and refuge issues as well as encourage churches to be in ministry with refugees and asylum seekers; and

10. assist the churches in advocating for fair and just immigration laws and practices.”

-The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church

ADOPTED 1996, AMENDED AND READOPTED 2000, AMENDED AND READOPTED 2004

SECULAR ORGANIZATIONS

League of Women Voters LWVUS Immigration Position

The **League of Women Voters** believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and

- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=LWVUSImmigrationStudy&CONTENTID=11176&TEMP_LATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

The Progressive States Network

State Immigration Project Policy – Options for 2008

Using Smart State Policy to Challenge the Anti-Immigrant Movement

INTRODUCTION

THE KEY to challenging anti-immigrant movements in the states is to respond with legislation that puts those promoting anti-immigrant policies on the defensive. Their goal is to pit African-American voters against Latinos, legal immigrants against undocumented immigrants, and native-born workers against undocumented workers. So progressive leaders need to promote policies that unite people across those divides, while highlighting that those leading the anti-immigrant charge are actually against the interests of working families of all races and immigrant status.

Anti-immigrant politics are focusing largely on five main messages:

- Undocumented immigrants are undercutting jobs and wages for native workers
- Immigrants aren't assimilating or learning English
- Undocumented immigrants are a burden to taxpayers and don't deserve public benefits
- Non-citizens are voting illegally in large numbers
- Immigrants cause crime and are a threat to national security

Progressives should highlight not only the facts that refute these arguments, but also identify policies that undercut the political alliances anti-immigrant forces are trying to build around these myths. In this document, we highlight five sets of policies that can directly challenge those rightwing views on immigrants and build alternative political coalitions:

- **Wage Enforcement as Immigration Policy:** Much of the anger at immigrants derives from fears that sweatshops and sub-minimum wage labor will undermine wage standards. Punishing employers who violate wage laws will politically unite all workers, immigrant and native alike, and actually strengthen the progressive political base. If wage enforcement bills end up being attached to anti-immigrant bills, many in the business lobby will break their current alliances with anti-immigrant politicians.
- **Encouraging Immigrant Integration and Naturalization:** Progressives need to emphasize that all available evidence shows that most are eager to become full members of our communities if given a chance. Highlight policies that help all immigrants better integrate, which will unite the interests of legal and undocumented immigrants along with the members of their communities who are already voting citizens.
- **Immigrants and Public Benefits:** While state leaders and advocates need to highlight the studies that show that undocumented immigrants actually pay substantial taxes and use limited public benefits, they also need to demand studies of the lost benefits to citizens and the costs to taxpayers from onerous anti-immigrant enforcement rules. Progressive leaders can show that broad-based benefits for all residents is the best investment in the long-term and should demand that the federal government, which receives billions in taxes paid by undocumented workers, share those revenues with states to expand services for communities with heavy immigrant populations.
- **Voting Reform versus "Voter ID" Attacks:** Given the complete lack of evidence that non-citizens have illegally voted in US elections, progressives need to challenge the voter ID

requirements that are disenfranchising many legal voters. While voter ID laws need to be defeated, the other part of progressive mobilization should be demanding that voting be made easier, through reforms like same day registration and voting by mail, for people who do overcome these new barriers to proving their legal right to vote.

- **Immigrant Outreach as Public Safety and Anti-Terror Policy:** Most law enforcement groups recognize that it is harder to protect victims of crime when millions of people living in our communities are fearful of talking to the police when they see a crime or are a victim of one. Progressive leaders can highlight this reality by promoting policies that protect undocumented immigrant victims and witnesses of crime when they contact the police and encourage community policing efforts involving undocumented immigrant communities. Each of these sets of policies emphasizes why better inclusion of immigrants in our communities, not sanctions, are the best approach. The key for progressives is to use legislative campaigns to actively focus public debate on areas where public attitudes towards immigrants are most positive and to direct frustrations over the economy at the corporate interests who are most responsible for stagnating family incomes.

Different policies will no doubt be promoted in different states. In a number of states where heavy immigration in the modern era is a relatively new phenomenon, political leaders are facing more fear among the public and may have to be more strategic in the policies they promote. In such states, a heavier focus on issues like wage enforcement policies may be the best option to create the greatest unity among progressive constituencies. In other states where long-term immigrant communities are politically mobilized in broader local alliances, passing more proactive immigrant policies can help change the national narrative and emphasize the strong pro-immigrant constituencies across the nation.

General Resources for State Immigration Policies

The National Immigration Law Center has a list of suggested pro-active measures in its Pro-Immigrant Measures Available to State or Local Governments: A Quick Menu of Affirmative Ideas that contributed to producing this document. The following additional documents and groups have many resources that provide research and other documents to assist state advocates in promoting good state immigration policies.

- NILC—State and Local Policies on Immigrant Access to Services
- National Employment Law Project, More Harm Than Good: Responding To States' Misguided Efforts To Regulate Immigration
- Fair Immigration Reform Movement, Immigration Reform and Immigrants at the State Level
- National Council of La Raza, State and Local Immigration Initiatives
- Drum Major Institute, Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class
- NCSL, Overview of State Legislation Related to Immigration and Immigrants in 2007 (April 2007)
- American Immigration Lawyers Association, Making the Case for Fair and Reasonable Immigration
- Policy—talking points and surveys and polls
- ACLU Immigrant Rights Project

- National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
- National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)

Wage Law Enforcement as Immigration Policy

WHILE MANY advocates of “fighting illegal immigration” claim to be doing so in the name of helping low-income workers, it is remarkable that almost none of them are addressing the pervasive theft of low-income worker wages by employers violating wage laws.

Advocates and progressive state leaders need to emphasize legislation that highlight a few key points:

- Only a minority of those working under illegal work conditions are undocumented immigrants;
- Our nation’s systematic lack of enforcement of wage laws has contributed to the dysfunction of our immigration system;
- The denial of employment rights to such immigrants has only further undermined wage law enforcement, thereby feeding more low-wage immigration.

In fact, cracking down on sweatshops and wage violators would be one of the most effective deterrents to employers recruiting undocumented immigrants. If all employers have to pay a decent wage, the attraction of hiring undocumented immigrants would diminish tremendously. Since going after employers who violate wage laws will politically unite all workers, immigrant and native alike, cracking down on those abusive employers will actually strengthen the progressive political base.

Where anti-immigrant politicians propose workplace sanctions against immigrants, progressives should be proposing amendments that highlight the broader illegality of broken wage and safety laws that undermine workplace standards for all Americans. If anti-immigrant politicians resist such laws, it will just emphasize that their concern for wage losses by low-income workers is empty and is just a smokescreen for hatred and nativism. And if every immigration bill is tied to proposals to tighten enforcement of wage and employment laws, many in the business lobby will break their current alliances with anti-immigrant politicians.

Core wage enforcement legislation should include:

- Increase Penalties for Wage Law Violations
- Enforce Wage Laws Against Employers Using Undocumented Workers
- Stop Misclassification of Workers as “Independent Contractors”
- Expand Coordination and Funding by Enforcement Agencies
- Strengthen Legal Services for Low-Wage Workers
- Encourage Private Action Against Wage Law Violators
- Prevent Discrimination Based on National Origin
- Make it a Crime to Coerce Labor based on Worker’s Immigration Status
- Stop Government Purchases from Domestic and Overseas Sweatshops

Increase Penalties for Wage Law Violations

In practice, the punishment for violating wage laws and getting caught is usually at worst just paying what is owed or maybe a small fine on top of that, but some states have created policies to significantly increase the penalties for violating those laws.

- A number of states have increased penalties for violations of the law, with New York State establishing one of the toughest penalties—up to a \$20,000 fine for repeat wage law violators. New York, Massachusetts and a number of other jurisdictions also require that employers caught violating the law must pay any legal fees of employees plus three dollars for every dollar they illegally failed to pay them—a much greater threat against and incentive to employers not to violate the law.
- Right now a range of minor criminal offenses by its owners or managers can deny a business an operating license or a public contract, yet repeat violators of wage laws continue to receive operating licenses and public contracts from most jurisdictions. However, responsible contracting laws in a few states and cities now deny public contracts or operating licenses to wage law violators. See Los Angeles Responsible Contractor Ordinance for one example and San Francisco’s city minimum wage for provisions that authorize city agencies to revoke permits or licenses for businesses that violate the law.
- Theft should be considered theft—and a number of jurisdictions are increasingly applying “theft of wages” statutes to force employers to obey wage laws—or face arrest and jail. In 2002, the police department in Austin began threatening employers with arrest if they did not properly pay their employees. Other jurisdictions, including Denver and Phoenix, have followed suit. Many states already have “theft of wages” statutes on the books, so all that is needed is to enforce these provisions. See NELP’s *Using Criminal theft of Service Laws to Enforce Workers’ Right to be Paid* (NELP) for more on how to use such criminal theft statutes or add them to a state’s criminal code.

Enforce Wage Laws Against Employers Using Immigrant Workers

In the words of New York’s highest court, applying state wage laws fully against employers of undocumented workers is necessary since weak employment rights for undocumented workers makes “it more financially attractive to hire undocumented aliens [and] would actually increase employment levels of undocumented aliens, not decrease it.”

States like California and New York have established clearly that their laws fully protect undocumented immigrants against retaliation when they bring wage claims against employers. For example:

- California SB 1818 declared that all legal remedies are available to workers regardless of immigration Status.
- In *Balbuena v. IDR Realty*, the New York Court of Appeals affirmed immigrant workers’ full legal rights under that state’s employment laws.
- The New York State Attorney General issued a formal opinion stating that federal precedent “does not preclude enforcement of State wage payment laws on behalf of undocumented immigrants.”

To assure that workers understand their rights at work, Iowa and Nebraska have laws requiring translators on the job where more than 10% of the workforce is non-English-speaking. See Iowa Code section 91E.2.

Fight Misclassification of Workers as Independent Contractors

States are also increasingly targeting the employer tactic of misclassifying employees as “independent contractors,” which excludes workers from minimum wage, prevailing wage, overtime, health and safety, and right to organize protections. A February report by Cornell University researchers estimated, for example, that 704,000 of the seven million private-sector workers in New York state were misclassified as independent contractors, costing the state \$175 million in unemployment insurance taxes each year and undermining those workers’ rights. Because of these problems, cracking down on misclassification of independent contractors is becoming a priority for many states:

- Colorado this year enacted HB 07-1366, a law requiring construction sites to make sure all workers, whether officially employees or “independent contractors,” are covered by workers’ comp insurance.
- Minnesota enacted MN Statute 181.723, which requires any independent contractor in the construction industry to be certified as an Independent Contractor by the state.
- California was the first state to create a “Joint Enforcement Strike Force” to focus on misclassification of workers as “independent contractors.” Under this system, tax and labor agencies work together through an “Employment Enforcement Task Force” to perform onsite inspections and audits of suspect small companies. In 2002, the Task Force collected \$74 million in unpaid wages and \$10 million in payroll tax assessments.
- Establishment of “joint employer” liability is a powerful tool to protect low-wage workers. The New York Attorney General’s office has aggressively pursued wage claims against joint employers, including against large supermarket and drugstore chains for unpaid wages due to delivery workers misclassified as independent contractors. (<http://www.oag.state.ny.us/2000AnnualReport.pdf>)
- In Connecticut in 2007, a bill was introduced that would have made it a criminal offense to hire undocumented workers, but instead it was modified into a state law to go after all employers who commit workers’ compensation premium fraud and cheat workers out of benefits—and the state out of taxes owed—by not carrying compensation at all. The new law, Pub. Act. No. 07-89, provides that employers who misrepresent the number or type of their employees for purposes of the workers’ compensation system, can be issued a stop work order and ordered to pay a fine of up to \$1,000. Employers worried about unfair competition supported the bill, and both legislative houses passed it unanimously.

See also:

- National Employment Law Project, *Combating Independent Contractor Misclassification in the States*
- Workplace Fairness, *Contractors*
- Cornell University Institute for Labor Relations, *The Cost of Worker Misclassification in New York State (Feb. 2007)*
- Office of Minnesota Legislative Auditor, *Misclassification of Employees as Independent Contractors* Expand Coordination and Funding by Enforcement Agencies. Whatever the

penalties and the law, one key to enforcement is making sure agencies are well-funded and creatively coordinate their work for maximum effectiveness.

- One of the most obvious places for states to beef up enforcement is making sure public money doesn't fund lawbreakers. Ohio's Attorney General has announced a program to crack down on government contractors violating the state's prevailing wage law. Richard J. Hobbs, executive vice-president of the Association of General Contractors, a construction trade group, applauded the plan since it "keeps your low-rate, less of a quality firm from coming in and underbidding" legitimate, honest firms.
- The New York State Attorney General's Office created a targeted campaign to stop greengrocers from violating labor laws and ultimately developed an industry code of conduct. (http://www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2002/sep/sep17a_02.html)
- The California Targeted Industries Partnership Program created focused enforcement projects aimed at
- The apparel, construction, agriculture, restaurant and janitorial services industries. (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/tipp4.htm>)
- To raise additional funds for enforcement, the San Francisco minimum wage ordinance provides for employer
- Fines to be provided to the city in order to offset the costs of investigating and remedying the violation. http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/site/uploadedfiles/oca/living_wage/nw/ordinance.pdf

Strengthen Legal Services for Low-Wage Workers

A number of states are increasing funding for legal services, often a critical ally for low-wage workers seeking to enforce their rights.

One key tool recently has been requiring banks to pay a higher interest rate on funds deposited in special accounts that lawyers use to temporarily hold money deposited by clients, so-called Interest on Lawyer Account Funds (IOLA). Florida—the first state back in 1981 to use interest on lawyer accounts to fund legal services—was also the first state in 2004 to require banks to offer competitive interest rates on those accounts, increasing revenue from that source from \$22.7 million in fiscal year 2004-05 up to \$67.3 million by the following year. New York and other states have since joined Florida with similar programs.

See also:

- New York Governor's Office, *New State Regulations to Increase Funding for Civil Legal Assistance to Eligible Poor New Yorkers*
- ABA Journal Report, *Expressing Their Interest: Rise in Rates Swells IOLTA, and Legal Services Gain*

Since the federal Legal Services Corporation bars funding for many immigrant workers, some states are working to provide funding for immigrant workers denied fair treatment. One model is New York's proposed A2289, which would provide legal services for immigration and immigrant worker matters excluded from federally-funded legal services. The program and services would be available to all immigrants including migrant farm workers and immigrant day laborers, regardless of immigration status.

Encourage Private Action Against Wage Law Violators

To supplement often under-funded public enforcement and legal services agencies, states can also encourage unions and other workers advocates to help bring legal actions against wage law violators.

- One approach are laws modeled on California's Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act, which allows present and former employees to collect not only damages for unpaid wages but also twenty-five percent of the civil penalties that are normally paid to the state as well.
- San Francisco's city minimum wage ordinance authorizes community groups and unions to file complaints, without having to show that the workers not being paid are their members.
- A number of states give outside labor advocates access to non-work areas of employer property to educate employees on their rights. Massachusetts, California (see §20900 of the CA Agricultural Labor Relations, Solicitation by Non-Employee Organizers regulations) and a few other states give farm worker advocates access to agricultural fields; states including California, Colorado and New Jersey require mall owners to give union organizers, as well as others, access to sidewalks, parking lots and interior public spaces. And the City of Hartford enacted a law giving the general public access to outside areas of certain large retailers. States should enact broader access laws to assure that labor advocates can access employer property to educate all workers on their rights, since such worker-to-worker education is the most effective means to encourage workers to come forward.

Prevent Discrimination Based on National Origin

Since government crackdowns against undocumented immigrants will likely lead to a more general backlash against all Latino and immigrant workers, states can take actions to protect their residents against unfair discrimination.

Illinois's recently enacted HB 1744 prohibits employers from enrolling in any Employment Eligibility Verification System (E-Verify), because of the poor quality of its databases. The bar on using E-Verify will continue until the Social Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security databases are able to make a determination on 99% of the tentative non-confirmation notices issued to employers within 3 days, unless otherwise required by federal law. (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/95/HB/09500HB1744.htm>.)

See also:

- Electronic Privacy Information Clearinghouse, *E-Verify System: DHS Changes Name, But Problems Remain for U.S. Workers*
- National Immigration Law Center, *Court Halts Government from Implementing Flawed Social Security No-Match Rule*
- NILC, *Why States and Localities Should Not Require Participation in the Basic Pilot Program*

To directly deal with discrimination against legal immigrant workers, New York's proposed A4603 would amend the state executive law and the civil rights law to clearly outlaw discrimination because of alien status. (<http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A04603&sh=t>)

Make it a Crime to Coerce Labor based on Worker’s Immigration Status

States are increasingly protecting the victims of human trafficking and punishing employers and others who coerce immigrants to perform labor under threat.

- California’s AB 1278, enacted this year, would void as contrary to public policy any labor contract provision that deducts from a person’s wages the cost of emigrating and transporting that person to the U.S.
- In 2006, Colorado enacted SB 06S-005, which makes it a felony to coerce labor by threatening to destroy documents relating to a person’s immigration status or by threatening to notify law enforcement that a person is in violation of federal immigration law. In 2007, Virginia enacted a similar bill, HB 1921, which provides that any person who confiscates, withholds or threatens to withhold any actual or purported passport, immigration document or other government identification document and thereby extorts money, property, or pecuniary benefit is guilty of a Class 5 felony.
- Oregon’s HB 2020 would similarly expand the crimes of coercion and theft by extortion to include threatening to report person’s immigration status. Stop Government Purchases from Domestic and Overseas Sweatshops. While states cannot change the bad trade policy that has undermined the economy of Mexico and other countries where immigrants are leaving for the U.S., states do have the power through their own purchasing decisions to help end the global sweatshops that drive undocumented immigration. California, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, along with sixty cities, counties and school districts, have changed their procurement policies to ban government purchases from contractors violating internationally recognized labor rights.

See also:

- Progressive States, *Stopping Immigration at the Source: Anti-Sweatshop Legislation*
- Global Exchange, *Sweatfree Campaigns*
- AFL-CIO, *Stop Sweatshops*
- Sweatfree Consortium, *Model Resolution to Join the State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium*
- Sweatfree Communities, *Procurement Officials in the Sweatfree Movement* General Resources: Wage Enforcement as Immigration Policy
- Progressive States, *Pervasive Violations of Wage Laws—and What States Can Do About It*
- Progressive States Network, *Cracking Down on Wage Law Violators*
- National Employment Law Project, *More Harm Than Good: Responding To States’ Misguided Efforts To Regulate Immigration*
- Brennan Center, *Enforcement of Workplace Rights*
- AFL-CIO, *Executive Council Statement on Immigration Policy*
- Drum Major Institute, *Principles for an Immigration Policy to Strengthen and Expand the American Middle Class*
- National Immigration Law Center, *State and Local Proposals That Punish Employers for Hiring Undocumented Workers Are Unenforceable, Unnecessary, and Bad Public Policy*
- List of Organizations involved in wage law enforcement, participants in a 2005 wage enforcement conference sponsored by NELP and the Brennan Center for Justice.

Research Studies on Enforcing Wage Laws

- LA Times, *How L.A. Kept Out a Million Migrants*—article highlighting how strong wage enforcement efforts encouraged undocumented immigrants to seek out states with weaker wage laws and enforcement
- Brennan Center—*Unregulated Work in the Global City* (2007)
- Brennan Center, *Survey of Literature Estimating the Prevalence of Employment and Labor Law Violations in the US* (2005)
- Urban Institute, *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*—report highlighting the devastating effect of workplace raids on children often left abandoned or traumatized in their wake.

Immigrant Integration and Naturalization

WHILE ANTI-IMMIGRANT forces raise fears that recent immigrants resist integration into American society, progressives need to emphasize that all available evidence shows that most are eager to become full members of our communities if given a chance. Studies by research groups like RAND have shown that Latino immigrants, for example, are assimilating into the economy at the same rate as earlier waves of European immigrants.

Politically, progressives can promote legislation that helps all immigrants better integrate, which will unite the interests of legal and undocumented immigrants along with the members of their communities who are already voting citizens. Especially if anti-immigrant politicians oppose policies that help legal immigrants, it will emphasize to the voting parts of those communities that all the rhetoric about the problem being “illegal” immigration is empty and the bigotry is aimed at the whole ethnic community.

Illinois has created the most comprehensive “New Americans Policy” involving business, religious and community leaders to expand English language programs, welcome centers, jobs programs and document translation programs aimed at new immigrants, but a number of states have promoted a range of legislation to better integrate new immigrants.

Core immigration integration and naturalization legislation should include:

- Expand Access to Adult English Classes
- Create Government Offices to Assist the Naturalization Process for Aspiring Citizens
- Provide In-State Tuition for All State Residents
- Protect Immigrants from Private Discrimination
- Prevent Abuses Committed by “Notarios” and Others Hurting Immigrants Through Fraud

Expand Access to Adult English Classes

Despite claims by anti-immigrant groups that new immigrants don't want to learn English, all evidence shows that there are millions of immigrants literally begging to learn English, only to find insufficient classrooms teaching in their communities. Many business leaders recognize that problem and want better language training programs, diverging sharply from anti-immigrant groups wanting to deny such help.

A number of states have proposed directed funding to help new immigrants learn English and integrate more easily into their communities:

- Illinois’s SB 1446, also known as the “We Want to Learn English Initiative” was passed by the legislature this October and requires that the Illinois Community College Board establish and administer a program to provide resources for lawful immigrants and refugees to learn English in order to move towards becoming full members of American society. The initiative provides for an annual budget of \$25 million, with no less than half of the funds appropriated for the Initiative being disbursed through community based, not-for-profit organizations, immigrant social service organizations, faith-based organizations, and on-site job training programs.
- Minnesota’s HF 979 / SF 923 will increase funding for affordable and accessible adult English language instruction. The additional money proposed was passed in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill.
- New York’s proposed A2289 would establish a program to provide resources to community-based organizations to facilitate adult English and civics instruction, along with assistance with the citizenship process.

See also:

- Migration Policy Institute, *Adult English Language Instruction in the United States: Determining Need and Investing Wisely*, July 2007
- American Immigration Law Foundation, *ESL Education Helps Immigrants Integrate, Interest remains high despite a national shortage of ESL programs*, 2002

Create Government Offices to Assist the Naturalization Process for Aspiring Citizens

By promoting legislation to help legal immigrants get citizenship, state leaders can focus the debate on the positive feelings voters have about new Americans becoming integrated members of our nation. States and local governments can take action to assist naturalization—from improving registration procedures at driver licensing offices and other government offices to assisting in the naturalization process. In California, Santa Clara County early on developed an Immigrant Relations and Integration Services (IRIS) to support immigrant integration programs in the county, serving as one of the inspirations for Illinois’ Office of New Americans, which is a leader among the 11 states that have offices to tailor services to immigrants and help with naturalization. Massachusetts operates an Office for Refugees and Immigrants that also assists in citizenship efforts.

States can create government offices or fund organizations to assist immigrants to successfully complete the process of obtaining U.S. citizenship through naturalization. A few recent proposals include:

- California’s AB 930 would develop and fund a naturalization and civic participation program to assist eligible immigrants through the naturalization process and to help them integrate into the economic and civic fabric of the state
- Connecticut’s SB 926 would appropriate funds for a community organization to develop and implement a state-wide customized training program to assist legal immigrants in obtaining their United States citizenship.

- Iowa’s SF 2269 would have the department of workforce development establish immigration service centers that offer one-step services to deal with the multiple issues related to immigration and employment.
- New York’s A9078, the Access for New Americans Act, includes civic and English classes, along with assistance with immigration requirements and related legal services.

States can also enact refundable tax credits for naturalization expenses:

- Indiana’s SB 240 would create an Adult Education Tax Credit which would give employers a credit of up to \$300 per employee and up to \$5,000 per year for payment of an employee’s expenses related to adult education programs, including citizenship training.
- Minnesota’s HF 747 would create a specific Citizenship Income Tax Credit.
- Texas’s HB 240 would require school districts to grant students an excused absence from school when appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork for U.S. citizenship or to take part in a naturalization oath ceremony.

States can also improve government communication and coordination over programs promoting immigrant integration:

- Illinois’s SB 1746 enacted the Latino Family Commission in 2007, which will advise the Governor and General Assembly, as well as work directly with State agencies to improve and expand existing policies, services, programs, and opportunities for Latino families.
- Minnesota’s HF 1315/ SF 1081 would create a Minnesota Commission on New Americans to study ways to eliminate under-use of immigrants in the state’s work force, develop business opportunities for immigrants; use the immigrant community to enhance and expand state trade relations with other countries, improve opportunities for the study of English as a second language, increase the efficient use of state programs and services, and take other steps to improve the economic and social conditions of immigrants in the state.

See also:

- Progressive States—*IL: Policies to Bring Immigrants into Economic Mainstream*
- New Americans Policy Council, *For the Benefit of All: Strategic Recommendations to Enhance the State’s Role in the Integration of Immigrants in Illinois*
- Illinois Coalitions for Immigrants and Refugee Rights, *The New Americans Initiative*
- NCSL, *State and Local Immigrant Offices*

Provide In-State Tuition for All State Residents

One key to integrating the children of new immigrants into our communities is making sure they can get a college education. Nebraska in 2006 joined nine other states that have passed laws to provide the in-state tuition rate to undocumented immigrants who attend state colleges and universities. This year, the Connecticut legislature voted to do so as well, although unfortunately the Governor in that state vetoed the bill. States across the country are promoting such in-state tuition or DREAM Acts: Arizona’s HCR 2029, Arkansas’s SB 981, Connecticut’s HB 5329/HB 5656, Idaho’s HB 220, Minnesota’s HF 722/ SF 653, New Jersey’s A4032, North Carolina’s H1183, Rhode Island’s HB 5308, Iowa’s HF 470/ SF 267.

See also:

- FIRM—In-State Tuition Campaigns

States can also ensure access to state or locally funded financial aid and scholarships, regardless of immigration status:

- California’s SB 1, which was enacted by the legislature but vetoed by the governor, would have made California high school graduates who meet the non-resident in-state tuition requirements eligible for a fee waiver at community colleges and enable them to participate in the Cal Grant state financial aid program.
- New York’s A4653 would expand scholarship opportunities for immigrant students

Protect Immigrants from Private Discrimination

To prevent local discrimination against immigrants, legislation should add immigration and citizenship status to the grounds of prohibited discrimination under fair housing laws and/or prohibit cities, counties, and landlords from making inquiries into immigration status.

- California AB 976 was enacted in October to block local ordinances that promote housing discrimination against immigrant community members; the bill would also prohibit landlords from making inquiries about immigration status or request documentation in most cases.
- Texas’s HB 2676 would similarly prevent any political subdivision from requiring that a landlord refuse to lease to a prospective tenant solely on the basis of their immigration status and would prohibit landlords from inquiring into a tenant’s immigration status.

Prevent Abuses Committed by “notarios” and Others Hurting Immigrants through Fraud

A number of states are taking action to stop the abuses committed by “notarios” and others who harm community members by engaging in fraudulent and unauthorized practice of law.

- California’s AB 630, which was enacted in 2006, requires a person acting as an immigration consultant to submit to and pass a background check by the Department of Justice and FBI. It also requires a registration with the Secretary of State.
- Kentucky’s HB 166, also passed in 2006, prohibits any person in the business of providing immigration assistance from giving legal advice and requires registration with the Attorney General’s Office before providing immigration assistance services in the state. The bill also requires providers to post signs that specify that the provider is not an attorney and may not give or accept fees for giving legal advice.
- Indiana’s SB 445, passed in 2007, requires any non-attorney who advertises as a notary public or notario publico to include a disclosure stating that the person is not an attorney with criminal penalties for failure to do so or accept payment for legal advice.
- Similar proposals in other states include New York’s A3235, South Carolina’s H 3025, Illinois’s SB 0546, Texas’s HB 906, and Wisconsin’s AB 468.

Other General Resources on Immigrant Integration Policies

- Migration Policy Institute, *Leaving Too Much to Chance: A Roundtable on Immigrant Integration Policy*
- Urban Institute, *Immigration Studies: The Integration of Immigrant Families in the United States*
- Grant-makers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration* (2006)
- CLASP—*The Challenges of Change: Learning from the Child Care and Early Education Experiences of Immigrant Families* (2007)

Immigrants and Public Benefits

MANY OF the attacks on immigrants focus on the idea that undocumented immigrants use more benefits than they pay in taxes. Advocates first need to highlight the multiple studies that have shown that even when you total up the limited services for which they do qualify—public school education and emergency medical care for example—undocumented immigrants pay significantly more in state taxes than states spend on those benefits. The Texas State Controller, for example, estimated that undocumented immigrants added over \$17 billion to the state economy and paid over \$400 million more in taxes than they received in benefits from the state.

Progressives need to emphasize three key points beyond educating the population:

- When draconian ID requirements are imposed, legal citizens, not undocumented immigrants, lose more benefits under such policies;
- The costs of trying to screen out undocumented immigrants is higher than their current burden to taxpayers;
- Anti-immigrant politicians have made the problem worse for state and local leaders by denying federal aid for communities needing financial help from the federal level.

State leaders need to both document the myths promoted by anti-immigrant forces, but also promote policies that emphasize the ways investing in public services reflects our common values and the long-run economic benefits from such investments.

Core immigrants and public benefits legislation should include:

- Commission Studies Showing Taxes Paid and Economic Contributions by Immigrants, both Legal and Undocumented
- Measure Costs of Burdensome ID Rules for Receiving Benefits
- Protect Privacy of Users of Public Benefit Programs
- Make Services Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking
- Provide Health Care for Immigrant Communities
- Pass Resolutions Asking Federal Government to Provide Funding for Local Immigrant Services

Commission Studies Showing Taxes Paid and Economic Contributions by Immigrants, Both Legal and Undocumented

To bring to light the real facts about the costs and real benefits of immigration, a number of states are proposing commission studies on economic role and contributions of immigrants, including workforce participation, business or jobs generated, revitalization of neighborhoods, and taxes paid.

- Virginia’s HB 1673, passed in April 2007, creates the Virginia Commission on Immigration as an advisory commission in the executive branch. The purpose of the Commission is to study, report, and make recommendations to address the costs and benefits of immigration on the Commonwealth, including the impact on education, health care, law enforcement, local demands for services and the economy, and the effect on the Commonwealth of federal immigration and funding policies.
- Illinois’ proposed SB 0059 would have required the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability to conduct a study, compile data, and make a report concerning the economic effects, both inflows and outflows, of illegal immigration on the public and private economies of Illinois.

Such official studies will just reinforce the message of other reports from California, Texas, Florida, New Mexico, Washington DC, Long Island, NY, and Arizona that new immigrants both pay taxes and contribute significantly to our state economies.

See also:

- National Immigration Law Center, *Immigrants and the US Health Care System*
- Urban Institute, *Civic Contributions: Taxes Paid by Immigrants in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area*
- California Immigrant Policy Center, *Looking Forward: Immigrant Contributions to the Golden State*
- Texas Office of the Comptroller, *Undocumented Immigrants in Texas: A Financial Analysis of the Impact to the State Budget and Economy*
- Economic Policy Institute, *Immigration not driving the erosion of health insurance*
- Iowa Policy Project, *Undocumented Immigrants in Iowa: Estimated Tax Contributions and Fiscal Impact*

Measure Costs of Burdensome ID Rules for Receiving Benefits

While the justification for passing these anti-immigrant laws was to save taxpayer money, follow-up studies have shown little evidence of any savings hardly surprising since there was little evidence beforehand that undocumented immigrants were receiving many benefits. ID requirements are usually so extreme that many legal citizens are turned away. For example, Colorado passed a law that prevented state agencies from even accepting a U.S. passport as documentation to obtain a driver’s license, leading to the irony that one of the state’s main proponents of the bill saw his daughter rejected for a license. The sad result, as the National Immigration Law Center notes, is that “U.S. citizens are less likely than noncitizens to have the documents required by the new verification laws.” (p.7) While the law was amended to allow passports and a few other documents, the law has still inflicted burdens, both financial and personal on citizens of the state. In fact, one study in Colorado found that the law there was costing the state

an additional \$2 million in increased administrative costs without any identifiable savings. States should promote similar studies in their states.

- See the Denver Post article “*Colo. Immigration Law Falls Short of Goal: State Agencies \$2 million cost and no savings*” for more on the Colorado study.

But if such ID rules save the taxpayers little money, the impact on *legal* residents and citizens can be severe. This was highlighted when the federal government imposed new identification requirements for new applicants for Medicaid. The result? Initial estimates were that 1.2 to 2.3 million citizens lacked the documents required by the new rules and were in danger of losing coverage. Follow-up studies by both the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that Medicaid rolls declined in 44 states after Congress imposed the new requirements—and most of those losing coverage were legal residents eligible for coverage but unable to produce the necessary documents. For other social programs covered by the states with the new anti-immigrant laws, confusion and fear led people to lose other benefits. States should commission their own studies to show the impact of benefit ID laws in hurting legal residents of their states.

See also:

- Progressive States Network, *Kids are collateral damage in immigration witch hunt*
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *New Medicaid Citizenship Documentation Requirement is Taking a Toll: States Report Enrollment is Down and Administrative Costs Are Up*
- Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Medicaid: States Reported that Citizenship Documentation Requirement Resulted in Enrollment Declines for Eligible Citizens and Posed Administrative Burdens* (June 2007)

Protect Privacy of Users of Public Benefit Programs

State leaders can highlight the lost privacy that anti-immigrant witch hunts engender by pursuing policies and resolutions that limit questioning and recording of immigration status by city and state agencies, except where required by federal law.

- One model is New York a3161 which would amend the New York City Charter to add that no city employee may disclose information as to the immigration status of individuals who use services provided by the city and limits disclosure of confidential information to only when law enforcement has constitutional warrants.
- Texas HB 2381 would prohibit an officer, employee, or medical staff member of a general hospital to inquire as to the immigration status or nationality of a person who needs or receives emergency services, unless then information is necessary to provide those services to the person.

Make Services Available to Victims of Human Trafficking

One area where the public has great sympathy for extending public benefits is to immigrant victims of trafficking, domestic violence, and other serious crimes.

- Florida HB 7181, California’s SB 1569, North Carolina SB 1078 all makes public social service benefits available to victims of trafficking, domestic violence, and other serious crimes.

- Hawaii HCR 204 proposed a resolution to have the state investigate existing obstacles, in statute, rule, or policy, that limit or deny benefits to victims of trafficking and assist such victims in attaining needed services.

Provide Health Care for Immigrant Communities

Many states are providing health care to immigrants, both legal and undocumented, recognizing that long-term investments in education and health care will pay off with a more skilled and healthy workforce in the future. More than half of the states spend their own funds to provide services to at least some immigrants ineligible for federal services.

- Illinois' AllKids program extended coverage to children of all income levels, regardless of immigration status. It was joined by Massachusetts, Hawaii, New York and California as those states continued to expand health benefits for many immigrant children. The state of Washington this spring extended health coverage to all children in families up to 250% of the federal poverty line (moving to 300% in 2009), again regardless of immigration status.
- Rhode Island proposed SB 415 would extended health coverage to children who do not meet citizenship or alien age requirements under title XIX of the Social Security Act.
- In California, even Republican Governor Schwarzenegger has said he wants to include all undocumented immigrants in any plan for universal access to health care, because as he argued in a speech announcing his own plan in January, "the decision for my team was do we treat them in emergency rooms at the highest cost available or we do it right and do it efficiently?"
- Rhode Island's HB 5412 would provide assistance to lawfully present immigrants who are ineligible for federally funded services (health coverage, food stamps, and/or subsistence income) due to arbitrary restrictions such as the five-year waiting period.
- Texas HB 1302 would establish eligibility for non-emergency public health benefits provided by a municipality, county, or public hospital for a person who would otherwise be ineligible due to their immigration status, provided that only local money is used to provide the benefits.

See also:

- National Immigration Law Center, *Comprehensive Health Care for Immigrants: A Sound Strategy for Fiscal and Public Health*
- National Immigration Law Center, *Immigrant Friendly Health Coverage: Outreach and Enrollment*

Pass Resolutions Asking Federal Government to Provide Funding for Local Immigrant Services

Since the federal government collects many taxes from undocumented immigrants, including social security taxes for which the federal government has to pay no benefits, a number of programs have been designed to funnel those revenues back to the states. In fact, federal policies continue to deny help even for legal immigrants who clearly pay taxes. A clear example is the failure to include funding for legal immigrant children in the recent SCHIP bill approved by Congress. Programs like the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) were also designed to channel some of those increased tax revenues to states that are particularly impacted by new immigrants to help them deal with increased costs that local tax revenues might not fully cover, yet the Bush administration and others have argued for cutting its funding.

Recognizing that the federal government collects taxes from immigrant workers without providing funds even for federally-mandated health care services, proposed California SJRX1 asks the Congress and President of the United States to enact legislation that would provide full reimbursement for the costs of providing federally mandated health care services to anyone, regardless of immigration status.

Voting Reform versus “Voter ID” Attacks

THE CHARGE that undocumented immigrants voting is a major problem is, unfortunately, a place where anti-immigrant forces are mobilizing around a big lie, stoking hate on pure fiction.

The cynical goals of voter identification laws pushed by the right-wing is highlighted by a basic fact—there is zero evidence that undocumented immigrants are illegally voting. At its “Truth about Fraud” website, for example, the Brennan Center for Justice has highlighted that fraud is a red herring used by the right-wing to disenfranchise legal voters through abusive identification rules. This is emphasized by the national scandal of the Bush Administration firing U.S. Attorneys, in part because some of those appointees refused to go along with partisan pressure to generate non-existent cases of voter fraud. Five years of investigations revealed no real evidence of voter fraud by an administration as determined to find non-existent voter fraud as nonexistent WMDs in Iraq.

Progressive leaders should be alarmed, though, that while little fraud has been stopped, the result in states that have implemented voter ID rules has been a sharp drop in voting by legally eligible voters, the real goal of right-wing campaigners promoting the myth of undocumented immigrants voting. A report prepared for the federal Election Assistance Commission found that in states with voter ID requirements, blacks were 5.7% less likely to vote and Hispanics appeared to be 10% less likely to vote under those requirements.

Such voter ID laws need to be defeated, but the other part of progressive mobilization should be demanding that voting be made easier for people who do overcome these new barriers to voting.

Core voting reform legislation should include:

- Hold Hearings or Create Commissions to Expose the Lack of Immigrant Voter Fraud
- Pass Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Acts
- Pass Laws to Make Voting Easier Once People do Manage to Register to Vote

Hold Hearings or Create Commissions to Expose the Lack of Immigrant Voter Fraud

State leaders need to expose the fraud in anti-immigrant myths about non-citizens voting in large numbers and use such hearings or commissions to refocus debate on the real ways voters are disenfranchised by burdensome election rules and tactics used to suppress the vote.

See also:

- Progressive States, *Fighting Vote Suppression by the Rightwing*
- New York Times, “*In 5-Year Effort, Scant Evidence of Voter Fraud*”
- Brennan Center, *!e Truth About Fraud*

- Project Vote, *!e Politics of Voter Fraud*
- Century Foundation, *Where's the Voter Fraud?*
- Eagleton Institute, *Testimony presented to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (February 8, 2007).*

Pass Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Acts

Too often, we see have seen campaigns to intimidate voters based on their race or use other tactics to suppress the vote of legal voters. States need Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Acts to create strong penalties for groups that suppress voter turnout through deception and intimidation. If anti-immigrant forces are going to raise fraud as a justification for voter ID bills, then progressives should demand through proactive legislation and amendments attached to their bills that all forms of fraud, deception and intimidation be removed at the ballot box.

See also:

- Center for Policy Alternatives, *Voter Protection Model Bill*
- NAACP LDF and MALDEF *Uncover Significant Voter Intimidation Attempts During Recent 2006 Election Cycle*
- People for the American Way, *The Long Shadow of Jim Crow: Voter Suppression in America*

Pass Laws to Make Voting Easier Once People do Manage to Register to Vote

In states moving to create greater hurdles to registration and voting are enacted, progressives need to demand simplification of the process once people produce the necessary ID.

- Registration to vote and voting itself should be combined, as a number of states have done with same day voter registration laws. Just this past session, both Iowa and North Carolina approved same day voter registration laws. See IA HSB 204.
- In order to give people a longer window to vote at their convenience, voters should be allowed to sign up as permanent mail-in voters, a reform enacted in Colorado just this year following states like Minnesota, Washington, California and Oregon (the last of which has full vote by mail or all elections.)
- States also need to reform database procedures, following best practices to improve voter matching and verification after registration to avoid problems when voters show up on election day.

See also:

- Progressive States, *Cleaning up Election Day Disasters*
- Demos, *Election Day Registration*
- Brennan Center, *Best practices in database matching an voter verification*
- Progressive State, *Voting by Mail: Ending Long Lines, Hanging Chads, & Paperless Elections*

Immigrant Outreach as Public Safety and Anti-Terror Policy

WHILE ANTI-IMMIGRATION forces to paint immigrants as a dangerous criminal force, the facts show that immigrants commit fewer crimes than the general population. But more importantly, most law enforcement groups recognize that it becomes harder to protect victims of crime,

particularly immigrants themselves, when millions of people living in our communities are fearful of talking to the police when they witness a crime or are a victim of one. As a report endorsed by the Major Cities Chiefs Association, representing the police departments of New York City, Los Angeles, Houston and city departments serving over fifty million residents outlined:

Immigration enforcement by local police would likely negatively effect and undermine the level of trust and cooperation between local police and immigrant communities. If the undocumented immigrants' primary concern is that they will be deported or subjected to an immigration status investigation, then they will not come forward and provide needed assistance and cooperation...Such a divide between the local police and immigrant groups would result in increased crime against immigrants and in the broader community, create a class of silent victims and eliminate the potential for assistance from immigrants in solving crimes or preventing future terroristic acts.

Progressive leaders can frame reasonable treatment of immigrant communities as critical to promoting public safety.

Core immigrant outreach for public safety and anti-terror policy legislation should include:

- Promote Community Policing in Immigrant Communities
- Protect Immigrant Victims and Witnesses to Crimes, Particularly of Domestic Violence
- Issue Licenses and Identification
- Prevent Racial Profiling of immigrants
- Condemn Private Vigilantism

Community Policing in Immigrant Communities

The broadest message by progressives must be that we don't improve public safety by making immigrants afraid to cooperate with the police or anti-terror authorities. States should condemn turning every police officer (sic) or, even worse, every social worker into a potential immigration enforcement agent, because it undermines community policing and other known effective law enforcement approaches.

Rhode Island HB 5237 and New Hampshire HB 404 would prohibit the use of state and local law enforcement agencies for the purpose of detecting or apprehending persons whose only violation of law is that they are persons of foreign citizenship who are in violation of federal immigration laws.

See also:

- *Major Cities Chiefs Statement on Immigration*—Police chiefs statement on need for separation of local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement
- Appleseed, *Forcing Our Blues into Gray Areas: Local Police and Federal Immigration Enforcement*
- Vera Institute of Justice, *Strengthening Relations between Police and Immigrants and Building Strong Police Immigrant Community Relations: Lessons from a New York City Project*
- CAUSA, *Collaboration with federal immigration enforcement hurts community policing*
- National Immigration Forum, *Success Story: Santa Ana Uses Community Policing Methods to Reduce Crime in Heavily Immigrant Area*,
- *USA Today*, “Chiefs, mayors order local cops: Leave catching illegal immigrants to the feds”

- Institute for Policy Research, *Community Policing and “the New Immigrants:” Latinos in Chicago* prepared for the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice (2002)
- National Immigration Forum, Police in “*New Immigrant*” States Say Asking Them to Enforce Immigration Laws Would Harm Public Safety

Protect Immigrant Victims and Witnesses to Crimes, Particularly of Domestic Violence

Progressive leaders can ally with both law enforcement and victims’ rights groups by promoting policies that protect immigrant victims of crime when they contact the police and by encouraging community policing efforts in immigrant communities.

To encourage victims and witnesses of crime, particularly those suffering from domestic violence, to come forward, state need clear policies to limit police inquiry into their immigration status. Rhode Island HB 5237 and SB 735 are both designed to promote immigrant assistance in crime fighting by protecting the identity of such immigrant victims and witnesses of crime.

See also:

- *Letter to Congress from the National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women*. Describing the impact that REAL ID will have on battered women
- National Immigration Project, *Noncitizen Survivors of Domestic Violence*, including *Local Police Enforcement of Immigration Laws and Its Effects on Victims of Domestic Violence*
- Violence Against Women Network, *Somewhere to Turn: Making Domestic Violence Services Accessible to Battered Immigrant Women, A ‘How To’ Manual for Battered Women’s Advocates and Service Providers*
- Electronic Privacy Information Center, *REAL ID and Domestic Violence*

Issue Licenses and Identification

State leaders need to emphasize that top law enforcement officials are on record supporting such driver’s license identification programs as a way to bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and better track state residents for law enforcement purposes. Top officials who have publicly supported these measures include former New York police chief William Bratton, who now heads Los Angeles’ police force, and anti-terror officials like Richard A. Clark, the counter-terrorism czar for Presidents Clinton and Bush. Eight states do not require proof of legal status to obtain a driver license: Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, with none of them suffering ill effects to public safety.

There are a number of models for removing bars to undocumented immigrants receiving licenses:

- New Jersey A2607 would permit the state to issue driving privilege cards, with the same privileges and legal responsibilities of a basic driver’s license, to persons who cannot prove ID or lawful presence in the country.
- New York a3755 would allow for foreign passports, valid documentation issued by the United States citizenship and immigration services and consular photo identification documents to be acceptable proof of identity for a license and would further provide that eligibility for a license not to be conditioned on a particular immigration status.
- California SB 60 would require compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005, but would also require the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue a driver’s license that permits driving, and is

not acceptable by a federal agency for federal identification or for any other official purpose, to an applicant who does not provide valid documentary evidence of lawful status under the federal act.

Many Americans are concerned about lost privacy in all aspects of our lives, so another approach is to combine licensing laws for immigrants with a more general policy denying the DMV the right to inquire about a wide range of personal information, from legal status to gender orientation, as long as the person can produce some reasonable identification.

See also:

- New York Coalition for Immigrants' Right to Driver's Licenses, *Equal Access for All Communities*
- National Immigration Law Center, *Immigrants & Driver's Licenses: Resources for Advocates*
- National Immigration Law Center, *Driver's Licenses for All Immigrants: Quotes from Law Enforcement*
- City of New Haven, *New Haven's Elm City Resident Cards Fact Sheet*

Prevent Racial Profiling

Hysteria over immigrants encourages racial profiling by law enforcement, so proposals like Texas HB 2428 / SB 150 would prohibit law enforcement profiling based on a person's immigration or nationality status.

Condemn Private Vigilantism

A number of proposed bills condemn vigilante or hate activity targeting immigrants:

- California AJR 16, adopted by both chambers in 2007, urges local, state, and federal government officials, when crafting immigration policy that affects the United States-Mexico border, to take steps to recognize and protect the human rights of immigrants, and publicly denounce xenophobia and anti-immigrant bias as having no place in immigration policy.
- Arizona HCR 2011 is a proposed resolution against civilian patrol groups in Arizona. The resolution opposes individualized groups that are not formally affiliated with any federal or state law enforcement agency and whose members take it upon themselves to invade Arizona.

General Public Safety Resources

- NCLR, *State and Local Police Enforcement of Immigration Law, A Toolkit for Advocates*
- National Immigration Forum, *State and Local Police Enforcement of Immigration Laws*

About the Progressive States Network

The Progressive States Network was founded in 2005 to drive public policy debates and change the political landscape in the United States, by focusing on attainable, progressive state actions. The Progressive States Network advances this agenda by providing coordinated research and strategic advocacy tools to forward-thinking state policymakers, legislative staff, and non-profit organizations. We function as a meeting space for progressive legislators, activists, and citizens, and serve as a hotbed of information exchange. We track legislation in all 50 states, helping to

spark change across the country. We make it easier for people to learn more about how to get good ideas passed into law—and take power into their own hands.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.progressivestates.org/files/immigration/ImmigrationPolicyOptions.pdf

Smart Borders Immigration as this Century's Civil Rights Issue

By Matthew Webster
January 27, 2008

Looking back on the past week of politics and King celebrations, this great man's name and legacy were name-dropped countless times and by divergent voices. Hundreds of people used "King" in conjunction with race, and several misappropriated his voice to supporting a particular political candidate, despite the fact that he pointedly avoided joining his support to a certain party because it would compromise his ability to change the status quo if he were linked to it.

King was a supreme believer in the "interrelatedness of all communities and states." He went on to state, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" (sic) idea. **Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds**" (*Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* 189).

Certainly King's movement was not tied up in, or limited to, racial inequality and segregation. By the end of his life he had already begun applying his love-force and nonviolent strategies to the anti-war movement. Critics in the late-1960s, some even from within his camp, struggled to understand why he would "hamstring" himself by moving on to another issue before racial equality was fully realized. But this was not a watering-down of his arguments; no, it was the fullest realization of equality. Dr. King died applying nonviolence to unions and working for class equality, and this progress would have inevitably led him to immigrant rights.

The civil rights movement emancipated those, be they Chicanos or African-Americans, who had been here and been treated unequally for years. Immigration reform is the next civil rights movement, perhaps the last within our borders. Immigration reform means equality for those who are new to this country and assured rights to the future generations who will come here in the future. This is the movement of our generation, to ensure equality and certain inalienable rights to every resident within our borders. King forwarded the fact that no man or woman is illegal; it is our duty to continue providing these rights to everyone in this great nation. As globalization begins to affect human migration patterns, it is crucial that the United States model immigration policies which are humanizing and fair, compassionate and progressive.

There are no outsiders, no us and no them. It is imperative that one of the world economic powers begin making moral policies. All the economic, all the social, all the political arguments for immigration can and have been made. When it comes down to it, our nation must begin making moral rather than dogmatic decisions. As Dr. King wrote, "If we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values" (*Autobiography* 340). Until we begin thinking morally, it will continue to mean little to us if we spend billions of dollars destroying countries far, far away. Until the U.S. spends more time investing in the hundreds of thousands of people crushed by the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market and less in trying to control the oil moguls, we will continue to fail to live up to our greatest.

Again, King hits upon this necessary morality of government. He writes, “...True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring... ..A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death” (*Autobiography* 340-1).

Immigration reform and border policies are *the* issue of this century in these United States and in the rest of the world. For anyone interested in challenging America to seriously reevaluate the issue of immigration and borders this March 8-16, please visit the No Border Wall Walk link on this page. As the primaries are in full swing and our country prepares for a new leader, this is a unique chance to join our voices in one loud *grito* for the voiceless.

Document Source (April 2009):

smartborders.wordpress.com/2008/01/27/immigration-as-this-centurys-civil-rights-issue/

US Conference of Mayors

US Conference of Mayors Unanimously Adopts Immigration Reform Resolution

Miami, Fl. - On Monday, June 23, 2008, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) boldly and unanimously adopted a resolution calling for comprehensive immigration reform. Introduced by Santa Fe Mayor David Coss, the resolution supports immigration reform that includes the reunification of families, provides legal status with a path to earned citizenship for undocumented workers, designs plan for current and future immigrant workers, and calls for a stop to raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"It's very significant for the US Conference of Mayors to take a stand on immigration reform. Our nation's cities are on the frontlines when it comes to the damaging reality of failed federal immigration policy and the disruptive effects on our economy, educational system and families. I think it's important for us to speak to the best of American traditions as a nation of immigrants, and work to resolve the immigration issue in a progressive way that shows tolerance and compassion," Mayor Coss said.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. The USCM voted on the resolution during the organization's 76th Annual Meeting held this year in Miami. During the annual meeting, mayors discuss a number of pressing issues such as rising energy costs, housing, safe drinking water, transportation, street crime, public schools, gangs, health care quality and costs, secure airports and ports, illegal guns, drugs, drug dealers and immigration - all things that they face daily. The policy positions adopted at the annual meeting collectively represent the views of the nation's mayors and are distributed to the President of the United States and Congress.

"We congratulate Mayor Coss and the US Conference of Mayors on passing this unprecedented resolution, for it is up to the leaders of our cities to provide innovative workable solutions to a broken immigration system. ICE raids and border walls are not the answer. These methods are not only cruel and immoral, but they are at a great cost to the taxpayers and we are starting to see the economic toll they take in our communities," said María Cristina López, chairwoman of the City of Santa Fe Immigration Committee.

Document Source (April 2009):

www.december18.net/web/papers/view.php?paperID=6717&menuID=41&lang=EN

ADDENDA

General Assembly of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III)

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and "to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories."

PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

- (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

- (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16.

- (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

- (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

- (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

- (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

- (1) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (2) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

- (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Document Source (April 2009):
www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

U.S. Department of Justice
Disorder at Day Laborer Sites
Rob T. Guerette

Pages 1-23 of Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Specific Guides Series
Guide No. 44

The Problem of Disorder at Day Laborer Sites

What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover

This guide addresses the problem of disorder at day laborer sites. It begins by describing the problem and reviewing factors that increase the risks of it. It then identifies a series of questions to help you analyze your local problem. Finally, it reviews responses to the problem and what is known about them from evaluative research and practice.

Disorder at day laborer sites is but one aspect of the larger set of problems related to both public disorder and to illegal immigration. This guide is limited to addressing the particular harms created by disorder at day laborer sites. Related problems—each of which require separate analysis—not directly addressed in this guide include:

- exploitation of day laborers by contractors who fail to pay or pay less than the agreed-to wage
- victimization of day laborers by angry citizens
- illegal immigration and human smuggling rings
- associations with groups engaged in trafficking women for prostitution
- links with other forms of organized crime, such as drug smuggling.

General Description of the Problem

Views related to day laborers vary considerably. Some people view them as valuable resources providing cheap labor that others will not do. Others see them as illegal immigrants and transients who take jobs, commit crimes, and cause community disorder. How communities view day laborers largely depends on how intrusive day-laboring activities become on citizens' daily lives. Most communities will be ambivalent to day laborers until their presence leads to problems, some criminal and some not.¹ Community attitudes against day laborers may be rooted in anti-immigration views more generally. How the community views day laborers and illegal immigrants, whether they are critical or sympathetic, will affect how any particular community addresses problems at day laborer sites. This guide does not adopt any particular judgment about illegal immigrants rather it is intended to objectively inform you about the effectiveness and consequences of various approaches to managing problematic behavior at day laboring locations.

Day laborers[§] are those who congregate in public places seeking manual-labor jobs such as construction, gardening, landscaping, and farming.^{§§} These laborers work daily for predetermined wages. The amount of money laborers earn varies from market to market and time of year. Day laborer sites tend to be concentrated where there is a proliferation of construction, manufacturing, farming, and other industries dependent on large numbers of relatively unskilled manual laborers.

§Day laborers are sometimes referred to as jornaleros or esquineros, the former meaning “day worker” and the latter meaning “street-corner worker.”

§§Researchers often distinguish between informal and formal day labor markets. Formal day laborers are those who work for temp agencies, contracted out on a daily or extended basis. This guide focuses on informal day laborers

Harms Caused by Disorder at Day Laborer Sites

Potential problems associated with day laborer sites center mostly on where laborers congregate while waiting for work, and not at the workplaces themselves. The following are among the many reasons police need to be concerned with day laborer activity.

Public Disorder

- The presence of large numbers of laborers and contractors often creates parking and traffic problems.
- The constant congregation of laborers in the same place for many hours creates loitering problems.
- Laborers often leave discarded bottles, food wrappers, and other litter at day laborer sites.
- Laborers may vandalize area property or deface property with graffiti.
- Laborers waiting all day for work may urinate in public.
- Injuries among laborers related to “swarming” may occur.
- Swarming often occurs when there are many more laborers than the contractor needs. Injuries sometimes occur when many laborers “swarm” around a contractor’s vehicle, hoping to be selected for a job.
- Laborers congregating on sidewalks may harass pedestrians.

Crime

- Simple and aggravated assaults may take place at day laborer sites.
- Laborers may be routinely robbed.²
- Laborers may drink and sell or use illicit drugs in public.

Economic Concerns

- Immigrant day laborers may make it more difficult for community residents to find work.
- Increased contractors’ reliance on day laborers may undercut salary levels and employee benefits for full-time workers.

Spillover Effects

- The presence of troublesome day laborer sites may incite citizens’ frustration and disdain for immigrants.
- Disorderly day laborer sites could lead to increased fear of crime among community members.
- Uncontrolled day laborer sites in residential areas may affect property values.

Day Laborer and Smuggling Links

As most day laborers are illegal immigrants, most have been assisted by smugglers. Research indicates that smugglers help nine out of 10 immigrants entering the United States across the Mexican border.³ Many immigrants use smugglers to help them find places to live in the United States, and become obligated to them if they cannot afford to pay them up front. Thus, some immigrants must work to repay smugglers for arranging their transport and housing. It is common for many immigrants to live in one house or apartment that is managed by the smuggler or someone with ties to the smuggler. These residences may be near day labor sites.

Factors Contributing to Disorder at Day Laborer Sites

Understanding the factors that contribute to your problem will help you frame your own local analysis questions, identify valid effectiveness measures, determine important intervention points, and select an appropriate set of responses for your specific problem. The literature on day laborers provides a general picture of the market for them, the conditions of day-labor work, the laborers themselves, their employers, the places where they assemble, and the link between day laborers and human smuggling.

Day Laborer Markets

Day laboring dates back to at least the medieval times, when laborers assembled in daily or weekly markets throughout Europe to be hired for farming and herding tasks. In the United States, day laboring dates back to the late 1700s, when common laborers (many of them immigrants) such as chimney sweepers, wood cutters, and cart men sought jobs daily. During the mid-1800s, “shape-up” sites in northeastern port cities had a system of hiring dockworkers for daily or half-day shifts.[§]

§ For more on the history of organized day labor, see Larrowe (1955), Mohl (1971), Mund (1948), and Valenzuela (2003).

Today’s market for day laborers exists wherever there is a need for construction and agricultural workers. The jobs include home construction and/or refurbishment, landscaping, roofing, painting, and harvesting and other farming activities. In some regions, day laborers work in factories on production lines.

For low-skilled or illiterate workers, day labor sites provide an easily accessible way to find employment. For employers, day labor sites provide easy access to a relatively large pool of workers whom they can hire when needed and release when not.

Employment Conditions

The specific conditions of day labor employment vary, but the arrangement is generally the same regardless of place or employer. Day laborers are usually paid in cash at the end of each workday. The wages paid to day laborers vary and depend on the time of year, the skill of the laborer, and the location of the day laborer site. By some estimates, the pay can reach \$80 to \$100 a day, exceeding federal and state minimum-wage ceilings.⁴ However, in markets where there are many more laborers than jobs, wages may be bargained lower, resulting in pay that is below minimum wage. Employment generally lasts from one to three days, is unstable, and provides no benefits or worker protections.⁵ Employers may sometimes mistreat day laborers, may not pay them for their work, may make them work without regular breaks, and may require them to work under hazardous conditions.

Despite the chaotic appearance of day labor sites, the daily procedures are relatively structured. Laborers usually gather at the site at around 6 a.m., waiting for prospective employers to pass by in

pickup trucks or vans. As prospective employers arrive, groups of laborers crowd around the vehicles pointing to themselves and indicating their availability for work. Employers select laborers for different reasons, some of which include the laborers' skills and ability to speak English.

Often, employers will return to the site and look for men they have hired previously. Many laborers wait several hours before getting a job. Some laborers do not secure jobs at all and usually leave the site in the afternoon. It is common for some laborers not to secure work for several days, and periods of unemployment lasting several weeks have been reported.⁶ The rate at which the laborer will be paid is often negotiated during the selection process, but is sometimes agreed to on the way to the jobsite or at the jobsite itself, once the laborer has seen the nature of the work. The employer often provides lunch.

Day Laborers

The exact number of day laborers is uncertain; however, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has estimated that approximately 260,000 wait each day on street corners for employment.⁷ In Los Angeles, some 20,000 to 22,000 day laborers are estimated to seek work every day.⁸ Most day laborers are male, entered the country illegally, are young, are uneducated, and either cannot speak English or have poor command of the language.⁹ Because of their illegal status, they largely lack access to formal employment. Most day laborers are Hispanic, though this varies somewhat by region. For example, in Chicago one study reported that the majority of day laborers were African-American.¹⁰

Day labor appeals to workers for many reasons. First, day laborers are paid in cash at the end of each workday. Getting paid daily is beneficial because laborers can use the money immediately to pay for food and other needs. Receiving payment in cash also eliminates the need to establish a bank account. This appeals to illegal immigrants who are wary of formal institutions and/or lack the documentation needed to establish accounts. Second, payment in cash means that day labor work is "under the table" and tax-free. This creates further incentives for immigrants who have worked for much less in their home countries. Finally, day laborers have the power to negotiate their wages for each job. They are free to accept or decline a job and to walk off the job site, should they choose. This negotiation power allows them to undercut the market rate, while at the same time make much more money than possible in their homeland.¹¹

Employers

Comparatively little is known about those who employ day laborers, but one study found that contractors hire the large majority of them. Private employers are the next largest group of hirers.¹² Employing day laborers is appealing because they are easily accessible, are hardworking, can be hired when needed, and are cheaper to employ since employers are not required to provide benefits packages. Employers often rehire the same workers once they have established a relationship and the laborers' work skills are established.

Day Laborer Sites

Day laborer sites exist mostly in metropolitan areas. Sites are often located adjacent to paint stores, plant nurseries, truck rental stores, and home improvement or hardware stores. Laborers may congregate in the store parking lots, marketing themselves for specific types of employment. For instance, those in front of paint stores are looking for painting jobs, whereas those in front of home improvement stores are looking for general construction jobs. It is efficient for day laborer sites to be located near such establishments because it allows prospective employers to pick up supplies and workers all in one stop. However, the congregation of large numbers of laborers sometimes causes

problems for merchants, who might take actions to keep the laborers off the premises, thereby displacing them to nearby street corners and sidewalks.

Day laborer sites also exist in public parks, vacant lots, and residential neighborhoods. These sites may exist for a variety of reasons; they are easily accessible to laborers and/or employers, have simply been there for many years, or have informally been allowed to exist by community members. Municipalities, church groups, and other community-based organizations have established a smaller number of day laborer sites to help deal with the large numbers of day laborers. These sites are usually regulated and pose the fewest problems for the community.

Understanding Your Local Problem

The information provided above is only a generalized description of day laborers and the circumstances of their existence. You must combine the basic facts with a more specific understanding of your local problem. Analyzing the local problem carefully will help you design a more effective response strategy.

Stakeholders

In addition to criminal justice agencies, the following groups have an interest in the disorder at day laborer sites problem and ought to be considered for the contribution they might make to gathering information about the problem and responding to it:

- area residents
- area businesses
- local government agencies (e.g., employment relations, public works, traffic engineering, city or county attorney, and community and economic development)
- state government labor/employment relations agencies
- religious and charitable organizations serving the day laborer population
- immigrant and human rights groups
- employers of day laborers such as contractors and landscaping companies
- area building and landscaping supply companies
- day laborers themselves.

Asking the Right Questions

The following are some critical questions you should ask in analyzing your particular day laborer-site problem, even if the answers are not always readily available. Your answers to these and other questions will help you choose the most appropriate set of responses later on.

Day Laborers

- What do you know about the day laborers (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, immigration status, language ability, criminal history, residence)?
- How do employers treat day laborers?
- Are citizens victimizing day laborers?
- How committed are day laborers to using a particular day laborer site?
- How committed are day laborers to day laboring?

Employers

- What do you know about those who employ day laborers (e.g., type of work, contractor, private citizen, company)?
- How committed are employers to using day labor?
- How committed are employers to hiring day laborers at the current location?
- What problems have employers had in using day laborers?

Merchants and Community Members

- How concerned about day labor sites are merchants and community members?
- What are their complaints about day laborers or about the sites?
- What actions, if any, have they taken in response to problems at day labor sites?

Locations/Times

- Where are day labor sites located? What makes the sites attractive?
- Which day labor sites have routine problems? Which do not? Why?
- When do problems at day labor sites occur?
- Which area merchants do the day-labor sites harm?
- Which area merchants benefit from the day labor sites?
- How do the day labor sites appear (e.g., trash and/or graffiti present)?
- How long have the day labor sites been there?
- Are the day labor sites located in safe or in high-crime areas?
- What are the vehicle and pedestrian traffic conditions at the day labor sites?

Human Smuggling Links

- Are day labor sites located near residences where large numbers of laborers live?
- Do day laborers owe money to smugglers?

Current Responses

- What is the police department's current policy in dealing with problems associated with day laborer sites?
- What is the police department's current policy in dealing with illegal immigrants?
- What responses do police officers use regarding problems associated with day laborers, other than arrest and prosecution? Are any especially effective?
- What are community and church groups doing in regard to day laborers and/or immigrants?

Measuring Your Effectiveness

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded, and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results. You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. You should take all measures in both the target area and the surrounding area. (For more-detailed

guidance on measuring effectiveness, see the companion guide to this series, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*.)

The following are potentially useful measures of the effectiveness of responses to problems associated with day laborers:

- reduced number of citizen complaints about day laborers
- reduced reports of violence
- reduced reports of robberies
- reduced traffic congestion around day laborer sites
- less evidence of trash and litter
- fewer injuries among day laborers
- fewer observations of drug and alcohol use
- improved perceptions of order among area merchants and residents.

Responses to the Problems Associated With Day Laborer Sites

Your analysis of your local problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your local problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should consider possible responses to address the problem. The following response strategies provide a foundation of ideas for addressing your particular problem. These strategies are drawn from a variety of studies and police reports. Several of these strategies may apply to your community's problem. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem. Do not limit yourself to considering what police can do: give careful consideration to who else in your community shares responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it. The responsibility of responding, in some cases, may need to be shifted toward those who have the capacity to implement more effective responses. (For more detailed information on shifting and sharing responsibility, see Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*).

General Principles for an Effective Strategy

You should consider a few general principles when developing your response strategy. Which particular responses you adopt should depend on what you learn from a careful analysis of your local problem. This should include an understanding of your community's attitudes toward day laborers and illegal immigrants. In places where there are strong anti-illegal immigrant sentiments, perceptions of police aiding day laborers could lead to citizen backlash against the agency. Conversely, arresting day laborers and other enforcement tactics may lead to resentment of police by citizens in communities that are sympathetic to illegal immigrants. In either case, community perceptions will have to be considered in formulating your response.

Strategies that focus exclusively on arresting day laborers or enforcing immigration laws are unlikely to be effective in the long term.¹³ Strategies that seek to reduce the harms caused by day laborer sites rather than those that seek to eliminate day laboring altogether are more likely to work. An effective strategy should not only deter problems associated with day laborer sites, but also must provide an appropriate location and manner in which to carry out day laboring. This will entail sanctioning prohibited behaviors and encouraging agreed-to procedures for soliciting day-labor work. This might include establishing a designated location and creating rules. It usually requires cooperation among police, other government agencies, community service groups, local merchants, employers, and day laborers themselves.

Specific Responses to Reduce Disorder at Day Laborer Sites

Managing Day Laboring

1. Improving the organization at current day laborer sites. Problems stemming from day laboring may not require new day-laboring sites; rather, better management of the ones that exist may be the solution. Creating and posting rules and procedures for laborers and employers to follow, placing trash containers and portable or permanent restrooms at the site, and so on, will reduce some of the associated problems. Enlisting managers to oversee the area will also reduce problems. These managers can be government employees, police officers, citizen volunteers, or community service groups.

2. Imposing time restrictions on day labor activities. Some communities have implemented time restrictions on when day laborers are allowed to solicit work.¹⁴ Allotting certain times of the day enables police to manage the process without having to devote substantial manpower to additional hours. It also reduces problems associated with laborers who linger around the site throughout the day. Time restrictions can be permanent or temporary, until a new day labor center is constructed.

3. Establishing new day labor centers. Many communities have established new day labor centers.¹⁵ The advantage of this approach is that the center can be constructed from the beginning and designed to eliminate the problems found at the day labor site. A suitable location can be selected and the facility can be built to accommodate day labor activity efficiently. The disadvantages are that it will require more funding and time spent getting it approved and built. It will also require other measures to ensure that laborers and employers actually use the center. The site can be either managed or unmanaged. Managed sites will be more orderly and have fewer problems.¹⁶

3a. Using volunteers to manage day labor centers. Using volunteers to manage day labor centers can help to reduce costs. Volunteers can include area residents and merchants, and religious or other community groups. In some places, day laborers themselves volunteer to help run the centers.¹⁷ However, volunteers alone are insufficient to manage the site. The center will need ongoing police oversight and support.

3b. Soliciting help from area merchants. Area merchants can help in establishing day labor centers. They can provide material and financial assistance in building the centers. For instance, in Glendale, California, an affected Home Depot donated building supplies for a new center. Merchants can also prove instrumental in working with police to ensure compliance among employers and laborers with newly adopted ordinances and procedures. Lastly, merchants can be enlisted to help in the ongoing management and administration of day labor centers.

3c. Obtaining grants and other financial support. Some communities have received city and private funding to build day labor centers. Community Development Block Grants have also been awarded.¹⁸ Other communities have established city- and privately-funded nonprofit organizations.¹⁹ To do this, it will be necessary to estimate how much funding will be required, and to identify entities with an interest in establishing and maintaining an orderly day laborer center. Because illegal immigration is politically sensitive, obtaining public funds to manage them may be difficult. You may be more successful obtaining financial support from non-governmental entities.

3d. Creating and enforcing rules and procedures at day labor centers and sites. Part of managing day labor centers involves establishing rules of conduct and procedures for laborers and employers to follow. In some communities, this has been a collective process

where laborers and employers help to create the rules and procedures. This democratic process should ensure acceptance by the participants and will facilitate successful self-policing among them. The rules and procedures should, at a minimum, include the following:

- prohibitions against drinking, drug use, and gambling
- prohibitions against swarming
- prohibitions against violence
- prohibitions against public urination and littering
- proper procedures for soliciting employers and laborers[§]
- provisions that ensure employers treat laborers fairly (e.g., pay laborers at the agreed-to price and provide breaks).

[§] *Examples of this include establishing specified zones where laborers and employers are allowed to solicit, creating a single-file roster system of laborers available for hire, and designating specific areas for various laborer skills (e.g., one area for construction workers and another for landscapers). See Calderon, Foster, and Rodriguez (n.d.); Ruiz (1998); and Toma and Esbenshade (2001).*

In addition to setting rules and procedures, sanctions will also be required to deter violations. Conditions could be attached to the prohibitive behaviors, such that those who violate the rules are temporarily banned from the center or site, in addition to arrest if the behavior is criminal. Allowing day laborers and employers to help in determining sanctions will promote acceptance and self-policing.

3e. Forming an advisory committee. Forming an advisory committee to oversee the day labor center can help ensure that it runs efficiently, and can also increase the center's support base. People from many different groups and organizations should serve on the committee. Advisors might include employees from government social-service offices, police officers, area merchants, citizens, employers of day laborers, day laborers themselves, and members of nongovernmental community-service groups.

4. Establishing supplemental programs at day labor centers. Some communities have implemented service, education, and training programs at day labor centers.²⁰ These programs provide needed services for day laborers and give them added incentives to use the centers. Participation in the supplementary programs also gives laborers constructive ways to spend their time while they are waiting for work. Educational and training programs include English language instruction, computer skills classes, and job preparation programs. Service programs include those for food, clothing, and shelter assistance; immigration services; legal services; banking services;[§] tool-sharing; and health care referrals. Establishing services and programs from outside groups—government or others—will also give outsiders incentives to manage and maintain the centers.

[§] *Establishing services to facilitate laborers use of banking services will be particularly relevant for problems involving persistent robbery of day laborers.*

5. Closing streets and alleys, diverting traffic, or regulating parking. Traffic flows and patterns at day laborer sites often pose problems. Altering traffic patterns will make it easy for employers to pick up laborers, and will reduce complaints associated with vehicle and pedestrian traffic obstructions. Establishing designated laborer-pickup zones will also reduce congestion and “swarming” problems. Once traffic procedures are established, it will be necessary to ensure that

laborers do not interrupt the process by approaching employer vehicles outside of designated pickup areas. Care should also be taken to ensure that any traffic changes do not cause undue harm to area merchants.

Enforcing Laws

6. Enforcing laws prohibiting disorder (e.g., trespassing, loitering, public intoxication, littering, and vandalism). Focused enforcement of disorder-related offenses will address some of the commonly found problems associated with day laborer sites. Enforcing these laws requires greater manpower and time spent monitoring the sites. Enforcement alone will not completely stop day laboring or the problems associated with it, but it does send a message to laborers that illegal behavior is unacceptable. Sanctions for lower-level offenses may also serve to remove those problematic laborers who might also commit more-serious crimes.

7. Enforcing laws prohibiting assault and robbery. Enforcing laws against assault and robbery will further define the boundaries of unacceptable behavior for day laborers. Such offenses will tend to be reactive and will require witnesses for successful prosecution, unless an officer witnesses their occurrence. It will be difficult to develop a prosecutable case since other laborers will be reluctant to give police information out of fear regarding their immigration status. Language deficiencies will also create problems. To increase success in enforcing these (and other) laws, assigning specific multilingual officers to day labor sites will improve communication between police and laborers, which will prove valuable in gathering information.

8. Establishing a highly visible police presence. A highly visible police presence, typically with extra uniformed officers, is intended to discourage illegal conduct by day laborers. It may appease area merchants or community members, but could also lead people to believe that the area is unsafe. It is also costly and will likely have only a temporary effect if not followed up with more permanent strategies, such as establishing a police substation in the area.²¹ This could be augmented with private security forces.

9. Creating and enforcing ordinances prohibiting the solicitation of work in non-designated places. Some communities have created city ordinances that prohibit the solicitation of work in certain areas.²² These ordinances are intended to relocate day laboring to designated places. Unless the ordinances are enforced, day laboring will continue to occur in places that are convenient for laborers and employers, if not for others, even if an authorized day labor center is established. Ordinance enforcement must be comprehensive and continual.

10. Enhancing fines/penalties for soliciting work or hiring workers in non-specified zones. It may be necessary to enhance the penalties incurred for violating work solicitation in non designated places. Small fines will likely be viewed as an added cost of doing business. Greater fines will compel day laborers and employers to use designated zones.

11. Initiating public-awareness campaigns. In conjunction with creating non-solicitation ordinances, some communities have used publicity campaigns to inform day laborers and employers of the new procedures, and to warn them about the sanctions if they violate the ordinances.²³ Alerting the participants serves to remove possible excuses for violating the ordinances. Police and others can distribute fliers and post signs at current day-laborer sites. Community service groups as well as area merchants and residents can also disseminate information. The postings and handouts should be composed in the intended audience's native language. Proper notification of the new ordinances will reduce negative sentiment resulting from subsequent enforcement.

Responses with Limited Effectiveness

12. Conducting sweeps and enforcing immigration laws. Sweeps are large-scale arrest campaigns targeting suspected illegal immigrants at day labor sites, without the intent to prosecute. Sweeps have long been a police strategy to control visible crime problems (such as street prostitution and street drug markets) when they have been pressured to do something, but have few resources for dealing with the problem. There is little evidence that illegal-immigration sweeps are anything other than temporarily effective at solving the problem.

Police agencies should be aware that enforcing immigration laws could lead to distrust of the police by illegal immigrants in the community. This could deter such immigrants from calling for police help when they are legitimately victimized or otherwise in need.

13. Prohibiting day laboring outright. There is no evidence that prohibiting day laboring outright is effective in the long term. Day laboring serves a need in the informal labor market and has existed since early times. De facto prohibition of day laboring by creating ordinances against soliciting work on public street corners citywide may relocate day laboring to other places, but it will not eliminate it or associated problems.

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The Commonwealth Institute

Fiscal Facts: Tax Contributions of Virginia’s Undocumented Immigrants

By Michael Cassidy and Sara Okos

Executive Summary

- o Estimates place Virginia’s undocumented population between 250,000 and 300,000 individuals.
- o The combined income of Virginia’s undocumented workers is between **\$2.99 billion and \$3.59 billion**.
- o Estimates indicate that half of Virginia’s undocumented population pays federal or state income taxes.
- o Virginia’s undocumented population pays an estimated total of between **\$145 million and \$174 million** in state income taxes, sales and excise taxes, and property taxes.
- o Undocumented immigrants working “on the books” pay an additional **\$114 million to \$137 million** in Social Security and Medicare taxes. Their employers match this contribution and pay an additional **\$4 million to \$5 million** in unemployment insurance taxes on their behalf.

Undocumented Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too

Estimates of the Tax Contributions of Virginia's Undocumented Population

Assumptions:	Estimates:
Number of undocumented	250,000 to 300,000
Average household size	2.29
Annual household Income	\$27,400
Annual household income after remittances	\$23,866
Income tax compliance rate	50%
Payroll tax compliance rate	50%
Estimates of Income:	
Total income	\$2.99 billion to \$3.59 billion
Total income after remittances	\$2.61 billion to \$3.13 billion
Estimates of taxes paid by workers:	
State income taxes, excise taxes, and property taxes	\$145 million to \$174 million
Social Security taxes	\$93 million to \$111 million
Medicare taxes	\$22 million to \$26 million
Total tax contributions of workers:	\$260 million to \$311 million
Estimates of taxes paid by employers on behalf of workers:	
Social Security taxes	\$93 million to \$111 million
Medicare taxes	\$22 million to \$26 million
State unemployment insurance taxes	\$4 million to \$5 million
Total tax contributions of employers on behalf of workers:	\$119 million to \$142 million

Introduction

The effect of undocumented immigrant workers on Virginia’s economy is an intensely debated subject. The discussion typically focuses on the costs of providing services to this population. Very rarely do the economic contributions of these individuals and families enter the conversation. In order to develop policy solutions that promote prosperity for the Commonwealth and all of its residents, it is vital that the discussion flows from data that factors both inputs and outputs.

Virginia’s undocumented workers, like Virginia’s documented workers, live in homes and apartments and consume goods and services. The fact that they are undocumented does not mean that they can avoid paying sales taxes on their purchases or that they can bypass property taxes, at least as part of the rent paid to their landlords. In addition to sales, excise and property taxes, at least half of Virginia’s undocumented immigrants are employed “on the books” where payroll and income taxes are regularly withheld. In fact, the Social Security Administration’s chief actuary has estimated that as many as three-fourths of this population has payroll taxes withheld.¹ This compares with an estimated 81 to 84 percent of the U.S. population as a whole, who voluntarily pays their income taxes on time.²

This study attempts to synthesize available data on the state’s undocumented population in order to estimate how much they contribute to state resources. Though it is impossible to calculate precisely how much these men and women pay in taxes, this study aims to approximate the scale of the tax payments they make.³

Tax Contribution: Methodology

In order to estimate the taxes paid by Virginia’s undocumented population, the Commonwealth Institute partnered with the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), a nonprofit and nonpartisan research organization that educates policymakers and the public on issues surrounding tax policy. ITEP maintains a model of state and local tax structures that allows it to estimate the taxes paid by different income groups within a state. Using estimates of Virginia’s undocumented population and the income earned by undocumented families, ITEP’s model provides a vehicle by which the sales, income, and property taxes paid by Virginia’s undocumented families may be estimated.

¹ Stephen Goss, chief actuary with the Social Security Administration, has suggested that as many as 75 percent of the undocumented pay payroll taxes. See Porter, Eduardo. “Illegal Immigrants Are Bolstering Social Security With Millions.” *New York Times*, April 5, 2005. A recent review of research by the Congressional Budget Office in its paper, “The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments,” shows that income tax compliance rates are typically estimated to fall between 50 and 75 percent. A 1994 Urban Institute Study by Rebecca Clark et. al. cites a Los Angeles County study that found 58 percent of undocumented immigrant workers pay income taxes. See “Fiscal Impacts of Undocumented Aliens: Selected Estimates for Seven States.” For the purpose of this study, the lower bound compliance estimate of 50 percent is utilized to estimate income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes paid by the state’s undocumented immigrants.

² GAO. Testimony Before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate. “Tax Compliance: Multiple Approaches Are Needed to Reduce the Tax Gap.” Jan. 23, 2007.

³ Some inconsistencies in aggregated estimates may arise due to rounding.

Population

The Department of Homeland Security only estimates the size of states’ undocumented immigrant populations for the 10 largest immigrant states. Because Virginia is not one of these states, this analysis relies upon a different estimation methodology utilized by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁴ A 2005 report by the Pew Center on the size and characteristics of the nation’s undocumented population places Virginia’s undocumented population somewhere in the range of between 250,000 and 300,000 individuals. These high and low estimates are used in this analysis to calculate tax contributions.

How Big is Virginia’s Undocumented Population?

The Pew Hispanic Center Estimates that between 250,000 and 300,000 undocumented immigrants live in Virginia.

Using Pew’s average of 2.29 people per household, there are between 109,170 and 131,004 undocumented households in the Commonwealth.

Income

The Pew Hispanic Center’s report revealed that the undocumented are considerably more likely to work in lower wage and lower education occupations than the naturalized and native populations. More specifically, it estimated that the average income for an undocumented family in 2003 was \$27,400.

How Much Do the Undocumented Make in Earnings?

The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that an undocumented household in Virginia makes \$27,400 annually in income.

The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that each year Virginia’s Latin American immigrants send

Whether the Pew Center’s national figure mirrors what is happening in Virginia is not clear. The actual state average may be higher or lower. Due to a lack of states specific data, the Commonwealth Institute used the \$27,400 estimate of income for this analysis.

One caveat regarding income assumptions has to do with remittances. Research indicates that many immigrant workers send a portion of their earnings to family members in their country of origin. In 2006, it was estimated that 90 percent of Virginia immigrants regularly sent money abroad.⁵

Furthermore, Virginia ranks in the top five states in terms of the size of annual remittances — with an average transfer of \$3,534.6 Because remittances reduce the income that immigrants can spend within the state, the pre-remittance income figure is used to calculate income and payroll tax contributions, while an income figure adjusted for remittances is used to estimate sales, property and excise taxes.

⁴ The Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Immigration Statistics uses U.S. Census data to estimate states’ undocumented populations; however, their methodology only allows them to do so for the top 10 immigrant states. Because the sample size is too small in Virginia, OIS does not publish estimates of the undocumented immigrant population for Virginia.

⁵ Williams, Krissah. “Immigrants Sending \$45 Billion Home.” *Washington Post*, Oct. 19, 2006.

Tax Payments

In order to estimate how much Virginia’s undocumented population contributes in tax dollars, the Commonwealth Institute relied upon ITEP’s model of state and local tax structures. Using the population and income estimates from the Pew Hispanic Center, the model projects the sales, income and excise taxes paid per undocumented household.

How Much Do The Undocumented Pay in Taxes?	
Sales and Excise, Income, and Property:	\$145-\$174 million
Social Security:	\$93-\$111 million
Medicare:	\$22-\$26 million
TOTAL:	\$260-\$311 million

While it is impossible for the undocumented to avoid paying sales, excise and property taxes, the exact proportion of undocumented workers who pay income taxes is unknown. This analysis assumes that roughly half of undocumented workers are employed on the books.

The ITEP model estimates that an average undocumented household pays \$1,596 annually in sales, excise, property and income taxes, while an average undocumented household that does not pay income taxes still contributes two-thirds of this amount in sales, excise and property taxes. With between 109,170 and 131,004 undocumented households and an income tax compliance rate of 50 percent, tax contributions total between \$145 and \$174 million dollars.

How Much Do Employers Contribute in Taxes on Behalf of Undocumented Workers?	
Social Security:	\$93-\$111 million
Medicare:	\$22-\$26 million
Unemployment Insurance:	\$4-\$5 million
TOTAL:	\$119-\$142 million

Undocumented immigrants who work on the books also pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, although they are incapable of benefiting from these programs until they become legal U.S. residents. Using current tax rates and a 50 percent compliance rate, undocumented workers pay an additional \$93 million to \$111 million in Social Security taxes, and an additional \$22 million to \$26 million in Medicare taxes.

The employers of undocumented immigrants (working on the books) match these tax contributions and pay an additional \$4 million to \$5 million in unemployment insurance taxes.⁶

Conclusion

The undocumented population contributes to the Virginia economy in substantial ways. They provide critical labor to certain industries, including construction, manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality,⁷ and the \$2.6 billion to \$3.1 billion in income earned by this group is used to purchase goods and services in the Commonwealth.⁸ Furthermore, the taxes paid by the undocumented

⁶ These figures utilize the 2007 average effective unemployment insurance tax rate for Virginia of .29 percent. The Public Policy Institute of New York, <http://www.ppinsys.org/reports/jtf/uitaxrate.html>, retrieved Jan. 11, 2008. See also: Knapp, John and Moyer, Megan Coltson. “Virginia’s Unemployment Insurance Program.” The Virginia News Letter, December 2003, Vol. 79 No. 6.

⁷ Passel, Jeffrey. “Unauthorized Migrants: Numbers and Characteristics: Background Briefing Prepared for Task Force on Immigration and America’s Future.” Pew Hispanic Center, June 14, 2005.

⁸ Income after remittances.

population total between \$260 million and \$311 million. When the payroll taxes of employers of undocumented immigrants working on the books are considered, these numbers increase to between \$379 million and \$453 million.

Support The Commonwealth Institute

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Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

IMMIGRATION FACT SHEET

PREPARED BY ALI FARUK, POLICY ANALYST
OCTOBER 2008

- **About 45% of the unauthorized immigrants in the United States did not sneak across the border. Rather, they entered the U.S. legally, but overstayed their visas.**¹
- **People without documentation are not criminals. Being unlawfully present in the U.S. has always been a civil, not criminal, violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act.**⁶
- **People without documentation are not a drain on our social services, because they are not eligible to receive them. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for most federally funded benefits including cash assistance, food stamps, and Supplemental Security Income.**⁷
- **Far from being a drain, people without documentation pay taxes.**
 - o Between one-half and three-quarters of undocumented immigrants pay federal and state income taxes, Social Security taxes, Medicare taxes and all undocumented immigrants pay sales taxes.¹⁰
 - o As of 2005, undocumented immigrants had paid about \$520 Billion to the Social Security Administration.¹⁰
 - o Virginia's undocumented population pays around **\$145 million and \$174 million** in state income taxes, sales and excise taxes, and property taxes.¹¹
 - o Undocumented immigrants working “on the books” in Virginia pay an additional **\$114 million to \$137 million** in Social Security and Medicare taxes.¹¹
- **It is not true that Virginia's law enforcement have their hands tied when it comes to dealing with illegal immigrants who commit crimes.**
 - o Virginia law enforcement authorities possess all the authority they need to pursue violent criminals, regardless of immigration status, and to detain criminals who are also immigration law violators².
 - o The only thing that Virginia law enforcement officers are not specifically empowered to do is to round up immigrants for *purely administrative violations* of federal civil immigration law.²
 - **Research indicates that as immigration rates have risen, the crime rate has dropped**
 - o While immigration rates have increased 50% over the past decade, the homicide rate has plummeted in that same period.²
 - o Foreign-born residents increased 83% and undocumented immigrants increased 115% from 1990 to 2000 in Virginia. But the violent crime rate in Virginia (and in the U.S. generally) has actually been dropping in that same period (since the early-to-mid 1990s).⁹
- **Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans.**
 - o Among males 18-39 the incarceration rate of the foreign-born was *substantially less (almost 4 times less!)* than that of the US-born.³
 - o Immigrants are 45% less likely than third-generation Americans to commit crimes.⁴
 - o Immigrants in Virginia appear to commit less serious crimes than native-born Americans.⁵
- **Immigrants and their families are learning English at the same rate as immigrants in previous eras.**¹²
 - o 2nd generation children of immigrants have a 91% rate of fluency
 - o 3rd generation have 97% fluency¹²

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