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Interfaith Coalition Announces Campaign for Action on Immigration Reform

Call On Congress, President to Tackle Tough Issue with Solutions that Reflect Our Values

(Washington, DC) – Today, several leaders from diverse American faith denominations joined with Members of Congress at a press conference to announce the launch of the “Prayer, Renewal and Action on Immigration” campaign. The campaign is designed to engage and educate congregations and people of faith on the immigration reform debate and will include as its first set of actions over one hundred prayer vigils across the country. The coalition will also present their platform on immigration that has been signed by over 500 congregations from coast to coast.

“The often politicized and divisive debate around immigration calls for a deeper dialogue shaped by our best religious values of compassion, mercy, justice, and tolerance,” stated the Reverend Jim Wallis, president and Executive Director of Sojourners. “The faith community has a clear responsibility in leading this conversation and helping those who are most vulnerable due to their immigration status.”

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition, a partnership of faith-based organizations committed to enacting fair and humane immigration reform that reflects our mandate to welcome the stranger and treat all human beings with dignity and respect, is leading this effort. The Coalition is asking the new President and Congress to uphold family unity as a priority, along with a process for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status, protect workers, restore due process protections and facilitate immigrant integration. To view the full platform, click [here](#).

“Our nation’s soul is at risk. Families are being torn apart. Human rights are being denied. Comprehensive immigration reform is needed now,” said Sister Eileen Campbell, from the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. “We recognize an urgent duty and challenge to stand in solidarity with immigrants, refugees and trafficked persons seeking fullness of life, and to act as a voice for those whose needs get lost in the political debate.”

The faith leaders were also joined by several Members of Congress. Among them was U.S. Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, who has been a champion for immigration reform in the House of Representatives.

"Respecting family values should be fundamental to our nation's laws," said Gutierrez, "but instead,

across America, families are torn apart by a system that values quotas over parents and their children or husbands and their wives. It is time for this Congress to heed the cries of millions of citizens—people from all faiths and backgrounds—who cannot wait any longer for fair and just immigration reform."

This call was echoed by other faith leaders during the conference. "The challenge we face is clear: We need comprehensive immigration reform. We need enhanced security at our borders, security derived from law but humane in its execution," said Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "We need a fair path to citizenship, a path to invitation rather than intimidation. Our welcome must be real and not grudging. Reform must include family reunification and a commitment to obey the law," he concluded.

"Family values have been a bedrock of our immigration system for decades. Immigration reform must honor this legacy," said Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15), chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. "I have heard so many stories where parents are torn apart from their children, and family members wait decades to reunite. Asians in particular face some of the longest family immigration backlogs. This broken immigration system works for no one, and undermines our economy and the fabric of our communities. Families are crucial to supporting investments in education that increase human capital, and to keeping afloat immigrant-owned businesses that create American jobs and expand our tax base."

Bishop Minerva Carcaño of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, spoke to the consequences of our broken immigration system. "As the suffering of immigrants and their families grows every day, we as people of faith long to bring healing to them and this land. As with people of all faiths, United Methodists stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters. immigration reform that is just and humane is the only way to bring healing to our land."

"When we move toward a day where our words and deeds embrace instead of erase we will witness Beloved Community," concluded John Crestwell of the Unitarian Universalist Association. "Immigration legislation must be humane and written in light of our common humanity. We are interconnected and interrelated."

For a full schedule of events, please visit www.interfaithimmigration.org.

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