

January 29, 2013

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

For more than twenty-five years, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church has called for immigration measures that would give to undocumented immigrants the dignity and respect that we all possess as citizens of the realm of God. In keeping with that legislation, I applaud the current bipartisan proposal for immigration reform developed by eight senators who have overcome party differences to act for the common good. I am particularly glad that the senators have proposed an expedited pathway to citizenship for [DREAM Act youth](#)—the hardworking young people who were brought to this country as children—and for the farm workers on whom so many of us rely for our daily bread.

At the 77th General Convention in July 2012, The Episcopal Church strengthened its existing call for comprehensive immigration reform by urging that [same-sex partners be treated in the same manner as opposite-sex partners](#) in immigration matters. I am grateful to President Obama for including this measure in his immigration reform proposal, and I urge that lesbian and gay families be treated equally in the comprehensive immigration reform legislation that makes its way to Congress. Last summer's General Convention also expressed its concern about [refugee policy](#) and [unjust immigration enforcement](#) and I ask lawmakers to ensure that new or existing enforcement measures are humane and just and that we continue to welcome and protect refugees and those seeking asylum.

We Episcopalians know that welcoming the stranger among us is one of our greatest responsibilities and joys. You can stand with our immigrant sisters and brothers in the Episcopal Church and across the country by calling your members of Congress ([House of Representatives](#) directory; [Senate](#) directory). When you call, please ask them to pass comprehensive immigration reform swiftly; include an expedited pathway to citizenship for DREAM Act young people and farm workers; ensure that families can stay together; treat lesbian and gay families equally; and provide for humane enforcement and protection for vulnerable migrants and refugees who are victims of crime and domestic violence.

In our Baptismal Covenant, we have promised to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being. Advocacy for just public policy is one way of fulfilling that commitment, and I am grateful for the witness of General Convention that guides our way.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings  
President, House of Deputies