



## General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church

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### ***United Methodist Bishops and Church Agency Welcome Step Forward on Immigration Reform Though More Changes Needed***

The General Board of Church & Society of the United Methodist Church welcomes the Bipartisan Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform presented by eight U.S. Senators Monday, January 28. This framework offers necessary steps towards policy solutions, particularly regarding a pathway to full citizenship for all undocumented immigrants and the strengthening of the family immigration system, both of which are crucial aspects of any legislation that is both effective and humane. The Framework is being put forward by Senators Michael Bennet, D-CO; Richard Durbin, D-IL; Jeff Flake, R-AZ; Lindsey Graham, R-SC; Robert Menendez, D-NJ; John McCain, R-AZ; Marco Rubio, R-FL; and Charles Schumer, D-NY.

“These principles offer necessary steps towards immigration policy solutions that are just and humane. A pathway to full citizenship for all undocumented immigrants and policies that will allow the reunification of immigrant families are crucial aspects of any legislation that strives to be effective and humane,” said Bishop Minerva Carcaño, Bishop of the Los Angeles Area. “The steps that are being recommended help us move toward immigration reform, but there is much more work to be done. One specific area of concern is making a pathway to full citizenship contingent on even stronger and potentially harsher border enforcement. We will continue to monitor the plan for implementing these principles for immigration reform. I do, however, applaud our Senators for their hard work and look forward to working closely with them in moving these principles toward effective, just and humane legislation.”

The Framework contains essential elements such as a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants called “DREAMers” and agricultural workers. It would also reduce waiting times for separated families to be reunited thereby strengthening the family immigration system and would protect the rights of workers with strong labor protections. Unfortunately, the Framework also makes the pathway to citizenship for many undocumented immigrants contingent on more onerous border enforcement, some of which could take years or even decades to achieve. “The enforcement-first proposals must be rectified before these proposals can be effective legislation,” stated Bishop Robert Hoshibata, President of the General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society and resident Bishop of the Phoenix area.

“The United Methodist Church has led in the grassroots mobilization of the faith community across the United States, organizing hundreds of public witness events in support of just and humane immigration reform. United Methodists are calling for humane and common sense solutions because they see firsthand how our current immigration system tears families apart, exploits workers, and keeps entire communities terrorized under our current enforcement policies. And as United Methodists have led in the struggle to defend and support the rights of immigrants, United Methodists are organized and ready to work closely with Congress and the President to see the principles in this Framework that are just and effective enacted into legislation.”

The United Methodist Church believes that “at the center of Christian faithfulness to Scripture is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner...to refuse to welcome migrants to this country and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored, and the migrant community in the United States is demonized...is complicity to sin.” (“Welcoming the Migrant to the U.S.”, 2008 *Book of Resolutions*)

“We need Congress to show the moral courage necessary to enact immigration reform,” Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society said. “The Framework has created a first step towards just and workable reform, and with some changes, can improve the lives of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Immigration reform must be both moral and practical. It will secure both the future of the United States and the rights of immigrants and their families. We applaud the leadership by the Senators and we urge all members of Congress to work towards enactment of just reform as soon as possible.”