



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

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### ***United Methodist Church Agency Welcomes Presidential Leadership on Just and Humane Immigration Reform***

The General Board of Church & Society applauds the announcement made today by President Obama in Las Vegas, Nev., calling for necessary reform in order to fix our broken immigration system. President Obama called for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, including undocumented youths or “DREAMers,” and to strengthen the family immigration system by reducing the large backlog of visas. Both of these areas are crucial to strengthening the country and upholding the rights of immigrants and their families.

Bishop Minerva Carcaño, episcopal leader of the Los Angeles area and co-chair of the United Methodist Interagency Task Force on Immigration, attended the president's announcement. “I applaud the president's leadership in addressing the broken immigration system,” the bishop said. “For too long our communities have lived in fear as immigrant families have been torn apart through unnecessary harsh enforcement policies. The immigration problems we face as a nation are complex and difficult.”

President Obama’s clear commitment to provide leadership and full engagement in the legislative process toward immigration reform will be critical, according to Bishop Carcaño. “United Methodists have long been active in working with other faith leaders from across the country in mobilizing thousands of people through hundreds of public-witness actions and meetings with members of Congress and their staffs,” she pointed out. “Comprehensive immigration reform is a major concern for us.”

The bishop said United Methodists will continue to advocate for reform that will provide a pathway to full citizenship for undocumented immigrants and reunify families that have been separated. “I look forward to working closely with President Obama and Congress to enact effective, just and compassionate reform,” she said.

Following on the heels of the Bipartisan Framework on Comprehensive Immigration Reform presented Monday by eight senators — four Democrats and four Republicans — the announcement by President Obama creates a real sense of momentum to finally passing immigration reform, hopefully that can be effective and humane.

The emphasis on increased border security is disappointing, however. The president called for further border security, and the senators' plan makes access to the pathway to citizenship contingent on increased border enforcement. This emphasis creates a stumbling block towards real reform.

Jim Winkler, chief executive of the General Board of Church & Society, said following the president's announcement: “We have spent billions on border security. We have deported more than a million people in the past several years, including 100,000 parents of U.S. citizen children. What more needs to be done?”

Winkler pointed out that Dept. of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has testified that the border is secure. “It is long past time to get serious about creating a pathway to citizenship free of any further enforcement measures and to reunify families,” he declared. “That is the kind of reform that we need and that will move us forward as a nation.”

United Methodists are organized like never before, according to Winkler. He said they stand ready to advocate for just, humane reform.