



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

## **Strengthening Welcome through Civic Engagement: An Introduction & Overview**

CWS is committed to providing protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions for refugees and immigrants. As part of its mission to build stronger, more welcoming communities, CWS is intentionally engaging with its partners to promote civic engagement work. This work will educate voters about immigrant and refugee rights; promote civic participation for new citizens as part of integration efforts, encourage voter registration and keep U.S. citizen refugee and immigrant voters from being discriminated against in the voting process; and elevate the dialogue on immigrant and refugee rights in the media and public forums.

### **What is “civic engagement”?**

Civic engagement refers to the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions that shape the community’s future.<sup>1</sup> Participating in civil society by voting, understanding the issues of the day, and engaging in civil and productive conversation with others is one of the many strengths of the United States and an important part of integration for new Americans.

### **CWS Principles on Civic Engagement**

#### **Civic engagement is a key component of integration**

Voting and participating in civil society are key to both the integration and naturalization processes. When naturalized immigrants and refugees exercise their right to vote, they empower themselves to be full members of their new communities. Even immigrants and refugees who are not yet naturalized, and therefore cannot yet vote, they bring important contributions to social issues important to their communities, through participating in events educating the public about the benefits that newcomers bring to their communities and the need to build stronger, more welcoming communities.

#### **Civic engagement is part of CWS’s mission to build welcoming communities**

CWS’s network of local offices, affiliates, and congregations know first-hand the impact that policies have on the lives of refugees, immigrants, and entire communities. We affirm that it is important for policy makers to take time to meet refugees and immigrants and understand their struggles. The CWS network is wide ranging and come from many perspectives, but we come together to educate our local policy makers on the importance of building stronger, more welcoming communities. The level of civic engagement in which our network participates helps build champions across party lines, at the local and national levels to create policies that lift up and value refugees and immigrants in our communities. Civic engagement work can also energize current volunteers and develop new leaders, as it brings communities together to engage with policy makers on meeting challenges and building stronger communities.

#### **CWS civic engagement work is non-partisan, and does not endorse any candidate or political party**

CWS seeks to promote civic engagement within its networks, and educate candidates and the public about the importance of building welcoming communities. CWS is a non-partisan, 501(c)3 organization. This means that we will not be endorsing parties or candidates, but we will continue, as we always have, to promote welcoming communities. All activities will be consistent with our CWS mission statement and core values to work with ecumenical partners and impacted communities to promote the dignity and rights of all people.

<b>CWS will facilitate and encourage:</b>	<b>CWS will NOT participate in:</b>
Education on refugee and immigration issues	Endorsing candidates or parties
Hosting and participating in town halls, debates, meetings and forums	Collaborating with political campaigns
Helping U.S. citizen refugees and immigrants register to vote and get to the polls on election day	Restricting access based on party affiliation or perceived voting behavior
Voter protection to make sure recently naturalized citizens have the opportunity to vote	Voting fraud or unethical behavior
Elevating the public discussion on the importance of building welcoming communities through letters to the editor and opinion editorials	Advertising for any candidate or party

<sup>1</sup> Adler, Richard P. and Judy Goggin. 'What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"?' *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3(3), 2005, pp. 236–253. <<http://jtd.sagepub.com/content/3/3/236.abstract#cited-by>>.

## Table of Contents

The following five sections are options that congregations and organizations can consider in their civic engagement work. Through these activities, current members of your congregation or organization can become more civically involved. These actions can change public sentiments about immigration and refugee issues and inform candidates that these issues are important to their constituents.

### **Page 1: Change the dialogue on immigrant and refugee rights by hosting and participating in town-halls, meetings, and candidate forums**

Many election events will be planned for the general public to learn more about candidates. By preparing succinct, to-the-point questions to ask during such events, you can make a difference in the public discussion on immigration and refugee issues. Your congregation or organization can also host such a discussion, or request a meeting to show candidates that their constituents care about immigrants and refugees. When organizing an event or requesting a meeting, it is important to always reach out to all candidates in a particular electoral race.

### **Page 2: Educate voters on issues of immigrant and refugee rights**

Creating educational activities that help your community become well-informed and thoughtful voters on immigration and refugee issues is an important component to building welcoming communities and seeing changes in policies that impact immigrants and refugees.

### **Page 3: Help U.S. citizen refugees and immigrants register to vote and get to the polls**

Registering to vote is an intrinsic part of becoming a U.S. citizen, and thus to furthering the integration process. Oftentimes people fall off the voting rolls when they move, or might not know where they should go to vote or when voting can take place. Educating new voters on how to ensure they are registered, and the details of Election Day, is vital to their successful voting experience and their integration as a whole.

### **Page 4: Help ensure U.S. citizen refugees and immigrants are not prevented from voting**

Many immigrant and refugee naturalized citizen voters have encountered intimidation at the polls. Individuals can volunteer with local organizations to ensure that election officials establish and implement fair and effective procedures on voter registration, list maintenance (a.k.a. purging), poll worker training, allocation of resources to election precincts, provisional ballots, and challenges – all to ensure that every voter, including specifically recently naturalized voters, have an opportunity to vote.

### **Page 5: Elevate the dialogue on immigrant and refugee rights in the media**

Public education is a critical piece to shifting popular opinion on the importance of building welcoming communities, and the more the media can spread that message the more we shift the narrative to inclusivity. Invite local media to your issue education forums or volunteer canvassing days. Write letters to the editor or opinion editorials on the issue of immigration. Utilize your churches newsletter and social media outlets to spread the word of any events and on the importance of voting.

## **APPENDIX A: 2012 Resource Guide to Civic Engagement Partner Organizations**

## **APPENDIX B: Sermons and Faith Initiatives on Civic Engagement**

## **APPENDIX C: Compiled faith-based statements on immigration reform**

DISCLAIMER: CWS is a non-partisan organization that does not take a position on parties or candidates. All voter education material is nonpartisan and is in no way intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate, political party, or PAC. In addition, all voter registration services facilitated by and affiliated with CWS are available without regard to the voter's political preference. Information and other assistance regarding registering or voting, including transportation and other services offered, shall not be withheld or refused on the basis of support for or opposition to particular candidates, parties, or policy positions. For more information, email Noel Andersen at [nandersen@cwsglobal.org](mailto:nandersen@cwsglobal.org).

## **Change the dialogue on immigrant and refugee rights by hosting and participating in town-halls, meetings, and candidate forums**

To successfully bring issues that impact immigrants and refugees to the attention of our lawmakers, it is important to attend and host town-hall meetings to ask questions of candidates running for office. By asking questions about immigrants' and refugee rights, we will remind both candidates and those attending that the way this nation treats immigrants is important not only to newcomers, but also to people of faith and service providers. The more people speak up on these issues, the more likely we are to see positive changes on immigration policies.

### **Researching candidates' records on immigration & refugee issues**

Bring together a group of congregants and community members passionate about the issue of immigration and refugee work. The setting can be casual, but internet access will be important, so that attendees can research candidate's positions on their own websites and issue sites including [www.thepoliticalguide.com](http://www.thepoliticalguide.com) and [www.immigrantslist.org](http://www.immigrantslist.org). Participants can write letters expressing their views and urging candidates to be champions for refugees and immigrants on the campaign trail. It is important to research and send correspondence to all candidates in a particular electoral race, and to steer clear of appearing to favor one candidate over another. Resources on immigration and refugee issues are available at [www.supportimmigrationreform.org](http://www.supportimmigrationreform.org)

### **Participating in town hall meetings, debate and candidate forums**

1. Find and RSVP for local events at which candidates are speaking
2. Invite other community members who care about immigration and refugee issues to attend with you
3. Arrive early to secure a good seat. Prepare and write down your question ahead of time.
4. When the time comes for questions or when you are able to meet the candidate, ask your question.
5. Follow up with the candidates' staff, emphasizing that your community cares about immigrants and refugees

### **Hosting a Town Hall Meeting or Candidate Debate**

1. Work with a team to identify a date, time, location, and strategy for the community forum.
2. Choose one electoral race and invite all candidates running for that position. All major candidates should participate. It's okay if not all minor candidates attend but make sure they know that the other candidate(s) will be attending, and ask if a surrogate can attend or if they can send a written statement instead.
3. Welcome all candidates and give them equal amounts of time for opening comments. Plan ahead with a non-partisan, neutral, and prepared moderator to facilitate questions from event organizers or those attending. Pre-screening questions is a good way to ensure they are open-ended and not perceived as biased. The moderator should not comment on the questions or otherwise make comments that imply approval or disapproval of a candidate.
4. Have attendees sign in for future follow up. In closing, thank all candidates and reiterate the non-partisan disclaimer.

## **Educate voters on issues of immigrant and refugee rights**

Creating educational activities that help your community to become well-informed and thoughtful voters is a key responsibility for all congregations and community organizations. There are many ways that congregations can create forums and spaces for dialogue, civil discussion and faithful reflection on important issues.

### **Integrate Civic Participation into your Programs**

1. Integrate civic participation and civic education into your orientation classes for newly arriving refugees to plant seeds for future community involvement
2. If your organization hosts citizenship classes, make sure to emphasize civic duty and voter participation as tools towards continued successful integration and leadership development.

### **In Worship and Congregation Education**

1. Address issue concerns in the worship life of the congregation, through prayers, sermons and Scripture
2. Utilize adult educational structures already established such as Bible studies, prayer meetings or classes
3. Invite individuals who can speak about the issues to they can tell their story - for example; invite a refugee who has been co-sponsored by a local congregation to speak, or a DREAM Act Student.
4. Discuss the issues in light of scriptural teaching and the resolutions of your denomination or organization
5. Integrate civic engagement themes and the importance of voting to sermons or homilies (sample sermon starters provided in appendix)

### **Holding an Issue Education Forum**

1. Work together with a leadership a team to organize the forum listing out logistics, strategy and goals of the activity.
2. Identify the key issues related to immigration you would like to hold a forum on, what is the issue that most concerns you? Some of the possible themes could include refugee resettlement funding or local services, the DREAM Act, state level anti-Immigrant legislation, voter ID laws/ election protection
3. Invite local or national speakers on the issue. Try to make it engaging with ways for the audience to discuss the issue and be able to ask questions.
4. Utilize the educational forum as a way to educate the broader public by sending out a media advisory to invite the press beforehand and a press release for the media after the event.
5. Issue education forums are a great opportunity to invite the broader public and engage more people in your congregation or organizations- Make sure to have a sign in sheet so you can follow up with people
6. Create space for participants to have discussion and reflection on the issue at hand.
7. At the forum, make sure to have a voter registration table as well, with information about polling monitors and election protection

According to the *Alliance for Justice*, “The law allows churches to engage in a wide variety of nonpartisan election-related activities, including voter registration and education as well as ballot measure campaigns. Federal tax law explicitly prohibits all churches from supporting or opposing candidates for public office, but it also recognizes the importance of their participation in the democratic process. A 501(c)(3) organization’s role during an election must be educational – and to encourage civic participation. Although there are many activities a church can do around an election, the church needs to stop short of directly or indirectly telling people how to vote or for whom to vote. Learn more: [bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Election\\_Checklist\\_for\\_Houses\\_of\\_Worship.pdf](http://bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Election_Checklist_for_Houses_of_Worship.pdf).

More guidance on hosting a discussion forum at [www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote/pdfs/guideline2pp-1.pdf](http://www.ucc.org/ourfaithourvote/pdfs/guideline2pp-1.pdf)

## **Help U.S. citizen refugees and immigrants register to vote & get to the polls**

### **Voting is an essential part of integration and is a civic duty for all citizens**

Voting is an important part of the integration continuum. When immigrants and refugees naturalize, they have the opportunity to make their opinions heard in the ballot box. By exercising their right to vote, new voters empower themselves and learn first-hand that their participation in democracy matters. Many, including the elderly and those who do not have access to transportation, often find it difficult to register to vote and get to the polls. Congregations and community organizations make voter registration and voting easily accessible by setting up tables after services or at community events and coordinating rides to the polls for those who need help with transportation.

### **Voter registration at community and congregation events**

Community events, including fellowship/coffee hours after worship services are great times to table to encourage voter registration. You can also distribute voter registration cards before or during an event or worship service, give people time to fill out the cards, and ask people to place the cards in baskets as they exit. Sharing stories about individuals who have not been able to vote in the past, or who are voting for the first time, is a great way to motivate everyone to register to vote.

#### ***Voter Registration Table Checklist***

- ✓ Voter registration cards, absentee and early voting ballots and relevant information on each
- ✓ State voter information from your Election Office, including a map of jurisdictions & poll places
- ✓ Signs: “Register to Vote Here!” & a non-partisan disclaimer, such as “Our voter registration services are available without regard for the voter’s political preference.”

### **The Early Voting List/ Vote by Mail/ Absentee Ballot**

The early voting list or absentee ballot (depending on your state), which allows people to vote by mail, is one of the most effective ways to increase participation and voter turnout. Because it is often difficult for people, especially the elderly, those who work long hours or multiple jobs, and those who do not have access to transportation, to make it to the polls on a work day, voting early by mail is one of the most helpful tools to make sure people vote. Not all states provide this option, but when possible, it helps to sign up as many people as you can to vote by mail.

**Voter Registration info by state and polling place locator at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)  
More Resources at <http://www.wellstone.org/our-programs/voter-engagement-schools>  
and [http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/online\\_voter\\_resources/](http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/online_voter_resources/)**

### **On Election Day**

Work with a team to find volunteers on Election Day for the following important roles:

1. Remind people to vote by standing in public areas and near polling places, with signs and hand-outs that say “remember to vote today!” with local poll locations and hours
2. Plan in advance to offer rides to polling places by finding vans and volunteers to drive, making sure you have insurance to cover your activities, and reaching out to communities who might need help with transportation. Make announcements at worship services and hang up signs in offices that encourage people who might need transportation help to contact a point person to sign up or set up a ride.

Make sure to keep all your actions non-partisan. For example, do NOT talk about a specific party or candidate, and do NOT wear buttons or stickers from any political party during a voter registration drive. If someone asks you or other participants how they plan to vote or which party they prefer, they should NOT answer the question. An appropriate response is “that’s not important to today’s voter registration efforts. We’re solely here to promote civic participation, and not a political party, candidate or agenda.”

## **Help ensure that U.S. citizen refugee and immigrants are not prevented from voting**

In collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders, voter protection programs monitor and seek to ensure that election officials establish and implement fair and effective election administration procedures on a comprehensive set of issues, including voter registration, list maintenance (a.k.a. purging), poll worker training, allocation of resources to election precincts, provisional ballots and challenges. List purging and Voter ID laws impact low income, minority groups and naturalized citizens at a higher percentage. Likewise, there has historically been intimidation at the polls for minority and immigrant or refugee naturalized citizen voters, which is why it is so important to make sure there is a transparent and honest election process.

### **Advancement Project Election Protection Toolkit:**

[http://www.advancementproject.org/sites/default/files/VPPActionKitFinal\\_0.pdf](http://www.advancementproject.org/sites/default/files/VPPActionKitFinal_0.pdf)

### **Join a coalition**

There is strength in numbers. While an individual can conduct voter protection activities, it is helpful to have the support of a voter protection coalition—a group of individuals and organizations committed to ensuring that the rights of refugee and immigrant voters in your community are protected by election officials and the election system. With such a coalition, you can meet with local election officials to ensure there is a fair voting process and everyone is given the right to vote. Connections can be made by selecting your state at [www.statevoices.org/states](http://www.statevoices.org/states) and [www.866ourvote.org/state](http://www.866ourvote.org/state).

### **Voter Suppression Laws**

An unprecedented amount of Voter Suppression laws and initiatives have taken shape over the last 4-8 years, making voter protection work even more important. Thirty-eight states have introduced repressive Voter ID laws, proposed list purging, limited early voting, restricted voter registration activities, all making voting more difficult for new voters. This is especially important in key states where new laws are being enacted that make it more difficult to register to vote, including GA, IN, KS, MI, PA, TN, and WI. Find your local State Voices network at [www.statevoices.org/states](http://www.statevoices.org/states) for more information. Also, a non-partisan hotline to report voter disenfranchisement can be reached at **1-866-OUR-VOTE** and [www.866ourvote.org/state](http://www.866ourvote.org/state).

**21 million people nationwide Lack ID.** Minority and foreign-born voters are less likely to have a valid photo ID, so voter ID laws place a disproportionate impact on these citizens. Specifically, 11 % of U.S. voting-age Citizens; 25 % of African American voting age citizens; 15 % of voting age citizens earning under \$35,000 annually; 18 % of citizens age 65 and over; and 20 % of young voters lack valid photo ID. (more information available at [http://brennan.3cdn.net/63836ccea55aa81e4f\\_hlm6bhkse.pdf](http://brennan.3cdn.net/63836ccea55aa81e4f_hlm6bhkse.pdf), [www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2011/05/24/the-disproportionate-impact-of-stringent-voter-id-laws](http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2011/05/24/the-disproportionate-impact-of-stringent-voter-id-laws), and [http://m.cnn.com/primary/cnnd\\_fullarticle?topic=newsarticle&category=cnnd\\_crime&articleId=urn:newsm:CNN.com:20120806:hair-dianis-voting-rights:1](http://m.cnn.com/primary/cnnd_fullarticle?topic=newsarticle&category=cnnd_crime&articleId=urn:newsm:CNN.com:20120806:hair-dianis-voting-rights:1))

### **Three Goals for Voter Protection**

- 1) Monitor and analyze election processes
- 2) Expand the range of perspectives working to identify barriers and resolve election problems
- 3) Broaden awareness and support for the voting concerns of immigrants and refugees in your community

### **Poll Workers and Poll Monitors**

- Poll Workers are the link between election administration—the laws, rules and procedures that govern the election process—and the voters. They are the line staff of the democratic process who sit at the table, check rosters and hand out ballots.
- Polling Monitors are responsible to make sure there is a fair voting process by monitoring poll workers and offering voters information about their rights. Monitors assist people in finding their correct polling station so their vote will count and not be a provisional ballot. Let voters know about the voter protection hotline, their options for getting help with their voting rights at the poll. They often conduct exit polling about voters' experiences casting their votes across the state to identify any significant successes or problems and record them for the next election.

## **Elevate the dialogue on immigrant and refugee rights in the media**

Public education is a critical piece to shifting popular opinion on the importance of building welcoming communities, and the more the media can spread that message the more we shift the narrative to inclusivity. Invite local media to your events and spread the word through newsletters and social media. Write letters to the editor or opinion editorials about how immigrants and refugees benefit your community.

### **Invite Media to Your Event**

For candidate debates, issue forums or even voter registration drives, its important to invite the media.

1. Coordinate with communications point people at your congregation or organization locally and nationally
2. Develop your list of press contacts – even those who you haven't reached out to until now
3. Identify your 2-3 media spokespeople for the event so they will be prepared to talk to the media
4. Develop press packets with non-partisan talking points and other related educational materials
5. Send the media you hope will cover the event a media advisory with event information (time, place, etc)
6. Assign one person to identify, sign-in, and help media personnel during the event
7. Send a press release the next day to media that didn't attend, to develop relationships for the future

### **Social Media**

- Spread the word of an event in newsletters, bulletin inserts, email lists and regular announcements
- Be in communication with local public radio ahead of time and put out a Public Service Announcement
- Utilize websites, Facebook and Twitter to get the word out, and post updates about future events. Post event information and questions on candidates' walls or on Twitter using the @ [their name] function. Remember to remain non-partisan, and steer clear of appearing to endorse or oppose any candidate or party on behalf of a congregation or 501(c)3 organization.

### **Letters to the Editor and Opinion Editorials**

Writing Letters to the Editor (LTE) and Opinion Editorials (Op-Eds) to your local newspaper are effective ways to lift pro-immigrant voices. Candidates carefully monitor these sections to gauge local opinions.

- Local papers are more likely to publish your piece (including neighborhood, ethnic, and religious papers)
- Keep it short (less than 200 words). State your most important point in the first paragraph.
  - *Paragraph 1* – your main point, why the issue is important to you, your personal story
  - *Paragraph 2* – facts, quotes, numbers, your 'ask' of all candidates
  - *Paragraph 3* – restate your point and declare your recommendation
- Mention by name ALL candidates for one electoral race, but do not endorse any candidate or party
- State the specific action you want them to take, varying by electoral race, for example:
  - National:* support the DREAM Act, family unity, and/or humane immigration reforms
  - State:* oppose anti-immigrant legislation and/or support in-state tuition for DREAM students
  - Local:* Ensure all residents feel safe reporting crimes by rejecting the 'Secure Communities' program

**Media Outlet Contact Maps by State at <http://capwiz.com/fcon/dbq/media/>**

## **APPENDIX A:** **2012 RESOURCE GUIDE TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **STATES VOICES:** [www.statevoices.org](http://www.statevoices.org)

State Voices is a national network—built from the states up—that helps grassroots organizations win shared policy and civic engagement victories and build long-term power.

CONTACT: Local State Director (Found on Home Web Page)

### **MI FAMILIA VOTA:** [mifamiliavota.org](http://mifamiliavota.org)

Mi Familia Vota Education Fund (MFVEF) is a national non-profit organization working to unite the Latino community and its allies to promote social and economic justice through increased civic participation.

CONTACT: Local State Director

### **COMMON CAUSE:** [www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)

Access: Increase access to voting by removing existing barriers, changing registration and voting practices, and ensuring voting rights for all Americans. Accuracy: Safeguard our voting systems by passing federal and state legislation to enhance voting machine accuracy and security.

Accountability: Hold election officials accountable by passing legislation prohibiting partisan activity and establishing strict conflict of interest laws

CONTACT: Local State Director (State contact map at [bit.ly/Ns692x](http://bit.ly/Ns692x))

### **VOTO LATINO:** [www.votolatino.org](http://www.votolatino.org)

Voto Latino is dedicated to bringing new and diverse voices into the political process by engaging youth, media, technology and celebrities to promote positive change.

### **PRESENTE:** [presente.org](http://presente.org)

Presente.org is a national organization that exists to amplify the political voice of Latino communities through online organizing.

CONTACT: Erika Andiola [erika@presente.org](mailto:erika@presente.org)

### **NATIONAL COUNCIL DE LA RAZA:** [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

Increasing Hispanic participation in the electoral process is critical for NCLR's mission to improve opportunities and open doors for Hispanics. Civic Engagement site: [bit.ly/Ns6h20](http://bit.ly/Ns6h20).

CONTACT: Local Affiliate (State contact map at [bit.ly/Ns6h20](http://bit.ly/Ns6h20))

### **PROJECT VOTE:** [projectvote.org](http://projectvote.org)

Project Vote works towards systemic changes. Our goal is to lower the barriers that prevent underrepresented populations from registering, voting, and casting ballots that count, while working to ensure public policies and procedures that encourage full participation in elections. Advocacy Tool Kit: [bit.ly/Ns6sKF](http://bit.ly/Ns6sKF).

CONTACT: Amy Busefink [abusefink@projectvote.org](mailto:abusefink@projectvote.org)

### **ADVANCEMENT PROJECT:** [www.advancementproject.org](http://www.advancementproject.org)

From Advancement Project's inception, we have worked "on-the-ground," helping organized communities of color dismantle and reform the unjust and inequitable policies that undermine the promise of democracy.

Voter Protection Action Tool Kit: [bit.ly/NxtrCS](http://bit.ly/NxtrCS)

CONTACT: [www.advancementproject.org/our-work/voter-protection/coalition-partners](http://www.advancementproject.org/our-work/voter-protection/coalition-partners)

Florida, Missouri, Ohio Contacts at [www.advancementproject.org/our-work/voter-protection](http://www.advancementproject.org/our-work/voter-protection).

### **ROCK THE VOTE:** [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)

We use music, popular culture, new technologies and grassroots organizing to motivate and mobilize young people in our country to participate in every election, with the goal of seizing the power of the youth vote to create political and social change. Ask any questions on elections in your state at [electionland.com](http://electionland.com).

CONTACT: [www.rockthevote.com/contact-us.html](http://www.rockthevote.com/contact-us.html)



## **APPENDIX B:** **SERMONS & FAITH INITIATIVES ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

### **Rev. Phill Kniss Park View Mennonite Church**

Jesus rubbed shoulders with the power structures—religious powers and state powers, the politics of the temple and the politics of Caesar. He was quite willing to confront either one, but not on their terms. The religious politicians were stuck on a certain kind of legalistic righteousness. Jesus confronted their power, but not by taking over their positions in the temple, and enforcing a new righteousness. He confronted their power by touching lepers, eating with tax collectors, hanging with sinful women, and otherwise living a different kind of righteousness. He practiced the politics of radical love.

### **Rev. Chuck Currie, United Church of Christ**

Part of what the Bible provides is a philosophy of how to lead both our private and our public lives. If we are compassionate to the individuals we encounter and concerned with justice above all else in community affairs then it is said we are building up God's Kingdom. It is always easier for a minister to talk about personal responsibility than it is to talk about what we need to do to improve society. But we cannot as Christians afford to forget about the larger world because Jesus didn't and part of our obligation as the faithful is to follow Jesus even into difficult places.

### **The Christian in the Voting Booth By Lutheran Rev. Richard Futrell**

From a Christian worldview, we see voting as a divine gift that allows us to think the way God thinks, to act the way He acts. Through voting, we can see others the way God sees them in His mercy. It's a way to show mercy and compassion, in the way God shows mercy and compassion. As Scripture says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

### **Catholic Bishops- Consciousness for Faithful Participation**

We urge our Catholic pastors and people to continue to use this important statement to help them form their consciences, to contribute to civil and respectful public dialogue, and to shape their choices in the coming election in the light of Catholic teaching. The statement lifts up our dual heritage as both faithful Catholics and American citizens. We are members of a community of faith with a long tradition of teaching and action on human life, and dignity, marriage and family, justice and peace, care for creation, and the common good.

### **National Council of Churches Christian Principles**

Our faith compels us to address the world through the lens of our relationship to God and to one another. Public discourse is enhanced as we engage civic leaders on the values and ethics affirmed by our faith.

### **Reform Judaism Resources on Voter Engagement**

As people of faith and American citizens we have an obligation to participate in the elections to ensure that our country's policies at the local, state and national levels reflect our commitment to social justice. Please see sample voter engagement guide for Reform Jewish Congregations at

### **Preachers Prepare to Get Souls to the Polls**

"Our duty today," said Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, before a crowd of African-American clergy members, "is to remember that the Bible tell us: 'For lack of knowledge, the people perish.' " The Congressional Black Caucus and the Conference of National Black Churches joined forces on Wednesday for their inaugural Faith Leaders Summit on Voting Rights. The Washington, D.C., forum, attended by members of Congress and about 200 leaders from black churches across the country, was designed to inform attendees about restrictive state-level voting laws passed around the country and to empower them to share with their home congregations information about surmounting subsequent voting obstacles.

## APPENDIX C

### compiled faith-based statements on immigration reform

There is a wide-ranging consensus among faith communities that immigration policies need to be reformed. Some statements from religious denominations and organizations, including Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical, Jewish, and Muslim faiths, are listed and hyperlinked below for your reference. More information on faith involvement in immigration related advocacy is available at [supportimmigrationreform.org](http://supportimmigrationreform.org) and [interfaithimmigration.org](http://interfaithimmigration.org).

- **American Friends Service Committee**: Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform In the United States (2006)
- **American Jewish Committee**: AJC's Statement on Immigration (2002)
- **Assemblies of God**: Immigration (2002)
- **Church World Service**: Statement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform (2006)
- **Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform**: Comprehensive Immigration Reform Statement
- **Disciples of Christ**: Four Essential Principles for Immigration Reform
- **Episcopal Church**: Fundamental Immigration Principles (2006) & Reflections on Immigration Reform (2010)
- **Esperanza USA**: An Open Letter to Evangelical Leaders on Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- **Evangelical Free Church**: A Christian Perspective on Immigration
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