

INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION

What our faiths say about INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18

Current enforcement policies have torn families and communities apart, devastated our congregations and violated the rights of U.S. citizens and immigrants alike. Each day in our congregations, direct service programs, health care facilities, and schools, we witness the human consequences of a broken, overly punitive, and outdated immigration system. We see the exploitation of undocumented workers and the plight of separated families, as well as the fear in communities where immigrants, and those perceived to be immigrants, are targets of injustice. People of faith who visit, accompany, or represent immigrants in detention facilities witness firsthand the toll incarceration takes on those detained, their families, and our communities. The exponential growth of the immigration detention industry has reached an all-time high, forged on an unhealthy alliance with for-profit prison companies.

Core values

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity
- Improve access to a fair and humane legal immigration system
- Prioritize family unity
- End collaboration of local police with ICE
- Promote alternatives to detention

This perpetuation of suffering offends the dignity of all human beings. Compassionate immigration reforms would help heal our communities and our nation. Regardless, immigration enforcement policies must treat all individuals with respect and dignity.



The face of immigration

Jose Juan Federico Moreno, is a father of five from Illinois. Jose Juan has called Illinois home for almost half his life and his children - all U.S. citizens under the age of 15 - have never known any other home. Jose Juan got charged with a DUI in 2009 and because Illinois did not allow undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses at the time, the charge was bumped up to an “aggravated” felony. Even though he paid the required fees, went to classes, and never drove under the influence again, ICE still ordered him to be deported.

After seven years of fighting his deportation, Chicago ICE denied his request to postpone the separation from his family, leaving him no option but to take sanctuary in a south side church in 2016. “Abandoning my children is not a choice I can make. I live for them, and I will fight to stay with them,” says Jose Juan.

“As people of faith, we believe that we are always more than our mistakes and that all God’s children deserve second chances. Faith compels us to respond to injustice, to welcome the stranger, and to promote families staying together,” wrote the church still hosting Jose Juan in sanctuary as of May 2017. *Story contact: Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, wilsonj@ucc.org*

How do our faith principles inform our policy recommendations?

Separate federal immigration enforcement and local community-driven policing. Policies that strengthen relationships between local law enforcement and the community are essential for public safety. Immigrants, family members of immigrants, and individuals perceived to be immigrants should neither feel vulnerable, nor fear retribution or deportation if they report being victim or witness to a crime. We oppose laws and policies that infringe on the rights of states, cities, localities, and police departments to limit interaction with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We oppose policies that erode trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities by mandating or incentivizing collaboration with federal immigration authorities through the 287(g) program, Secure Communities, or other avenues.

Uphold the sanctity of sensitive locations. Immigration enforcement actions should never happen at “sensitive locations,” such as schools, courthouses, places of worship, and healthcare facilities, where community members should feel safe and not in fear of deportation.

Utilize and affirm prosecutorial and judicial discretion. Maintaining judicial and prosecutorial discretion is a core component of a fair justice system. A one-size-fits-all approach to punishment does not serve our communities and undermines the integrity of our justice system. In numerous cases, ICE has not properly applied prosecutorial discretion, particularly for persons with past criminal convictions. Often times, such convictions have occurred several years or even decades ago, and still a person is put into deportation proceedings. This has resulted in the deportation of individuals who clearly pose no threat to public safety. This is a fundamental injustice that must be corrected. We support prosecutorial discretion guidelines in line with principles of fairness and public safety.

Reduce the use of detention for immigration enforcement and improve existing oversight and quality of detention conditions. For as long as immigrants and other individuals are detained, existing detention facilities’ conditions must be improved. We support increasing access to legal counsel, pro bono legal services, and legal orientation programs for immigrant detainees. Congress must establish oversight for all facilities and ensure rigorous medical treatment standards and access to visitation and pastoral care. We oppose mandatory detention and support removing the profit-motive from detention. Meaningful detention reform requires the wholesale expansion of community-based, not for-profit, alternatives to detention (ATD) programs.

\$19 BILLION

Immigration enforcement spending annually

34,000+ IMMIGRANTS

In detention on a daily basis

600+ DAYS

The average wait time for case adjudication due to the immigration court backlog

800+ SANCTUARY HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Committed to ensuring that immigrant community members are protected from unjust deportation

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African American Ministers in Action ◦ American Baptist Home Mission Societies of the American Baptist Churches, USA ◦ American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) ◦ American Jewish Committee (AJC) ◦ Bread for the World ◦ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee and Immigration Ministries ◦ Christian Community Development Association ◦ Christian Reformed Church ◦ Church of the Brethren ◦ Church World Service (CWS) ◦ CLINIC | Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. ◦ Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach ◦ Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) ◦ Daughters of Charity ◦ The Episcopal Church ◦ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) ◦ Franciscan Action Network ◦ Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) ◦ HIAS ◦ Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN) ◦ Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) ◦ Irish Apostolate USA ◦ Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States ◦ Jesuit Refugee Service ◦ Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) ◦ Leadership Conference of Women Religious ◦ Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) ◦ Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns ◦ Mennonite Central Committee U.S. ◦ Muslim Public Affairs Council ◦ National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd ◦ National Council of Churches ◦ National Council of Jewish Women ◦ National Justice for Our Neighbors ◦ NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice ◦ Pax Christi USA ◦ PICO National Network ◦ Presbyterian Church USA, Immigration Issues Offices ◦ Scalabrinian International Migration Network (SIMN)/Center for Migration Studies (CMS) ◦ Sisters of Mercy of the Americas ◦ Sojourners ◦ T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights ◦ Union for Reform Judaism ◦ Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) ◦ Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) ◦ United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries ◦ United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society ◦ UNITED SIKHS ◦ World Relief ◦ interfaithimmigration.org 2017