

Dear Governor Abbott,

As faith leaders from many different traditions, we write to condemn the anti-immigrant legislation you signed into law that will target and discriminate against our immigrant neighbors. As people of faith, we look first to our common values rooted in our sacred texts that remind us to love our neighbor and welcome the sojourner among us. As Leviticus 19:34 (CE) reminds us:

“Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”

We must recall that we are a state with a proud legacy of immigrants, and we recognize the valuable contributions immigrants and refugees bring to our communities and economy.

[SB 4](#) will prohibit state, local, and campus police departments from adopting policies that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. SB 4 will result in state, local, and campus police serving as immigration enforcement officers to detain and hold immigrants in custody for Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). Doing so would attempt to conscript local law enforcement to prioritize immigration enforcement over local public safety needs.

SB 4 will also allow local police officers to question the immigration status of people they not only lawfully arrest, but also “legally detain,” such as during traffic stops. SB 4 is now the pinnacle of harsh laws that promote racial profiling and would stain our state’s reputation without making it any safer.

State and local agencies that assist the federal government in the enforcement of immigration have faced significant financial burdens due to the costs of holding people for ICE without reimbursement, as well as potential costs associated with litigation against the state for constitutional violations of due process.<sup>1</sup>

These provisions will not make communities, college campuses, or cities in Texas any safer. Rather, they will reverse community-based policing efforts that are vital to public safety in our neighborhoods. Safety increases for everyone when all individuals can report dangerous situations and seek protection from violence without the fear of being deported and separated from their families.

As faith leaders, we work to uplift and support immigrants in our midst. We support policies and programs that help build welcoming communities. This legislation sends an unwelcoming message of exclusion. It will undermine trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement and create a climate of fear at universities and colleges.

We are praying that you may find compassion in your discernment process and stop any legislation that hurts immigrants and reduce community safety. We urge you to think about the moral imperative to love our neighbor, welcome the immigrant, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the U.S. District Court of Oregon found that the county law enforcement violated the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by detaining and incarcerating an immigrant under an ICE detainer.  
<[http://media.oregonlive.com/clackamascounty\\_impact/other/Miranda%20Olivares%20MSJ%20decision.140411.pdf](http://media.oregonlive.com/clackamascounty_impact/other/Miranda%20Olivares%20MSJ%20decision.140411.pdf)>.

Sincerely,

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