**Talking Points on Detention and Deportation**

***What’s included in President Trump’s budget request?***

President Trump’s budget requests an additional **$4.5 billion** for unnecessary immigration enforcement expansion, a **23% increase** over immigration enforcement spending in 2016. The request would exponentially increase the number of immigrants languishing in unjust detention and waste billions on a costly and dangerous expansion of immigration enforcement and border militarization.

* **A 66% increase in immigration detention.** President Trump requested $1.5 billion to maintain 51,379 beds, well above and beyond the 34,000 beds previously authorized by Congress.
* **Increase the deportation force by 1,500.**The request includes $300 million to hire 1,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers to patrol U.S. communities. It also includes money for 500 new Border Patrol agents, for a total of 20,258 agents. Customs and Border Protection has struggled to hire qualified agents to meet the current level and has proposed to lower hiring standards to expedite the process. Watering down CBP hiring standards risks employing CBP officers and agents who could jeopardize national security and community safety; there is a history of agents who have been prone to corruption, collusion with international drug trafficking organizations, or abuses of power through excessive force or sexual assault.
* **A $2.6 billion down-payment for the wall and increased militarization of border communities including sensors, towers, and drones.**Barriers and militarization along the southern border have proven ineffective, costly, harmful for the environment, and dangerous for human and civil rights.
* **$15 million increase to expand mandatory E-Verify.** Absent of programmatic and immigration policy reforms, E-Verify will continue to hurt immigrants, employers, and U.S. workers alike. The current system is intrusive to privacy, rampant with errors which slows down the process of hiring, leads to increased discrimination, and leaves individuals with few avenues to contest false results.
* **60 additional attorneys to criminally prosecute migrants.** Criminal prosecutions for entry and re-entry already make up over half of the all federal prosecutions, a gross misallocation of federal law enforcement resources. The emphasis on criminal prosecution comes at the expense of legal orientation programs and accessible legal aid to help migrants successfully navigate the asylum and immigration systems. Our government resources should be ensuring all people have full access to the justice system rather than reinforcing a system that leads to more mass incarceration.
* **20 attorneys to strip landowners from their land, in order to build additional barriers and wall along the southern border.**
* **75 additional immigration judge teams.** We are supportive of an increase in judge teams (an immigration judge and seven court staffers), but troubled by the framing that these teams would “bolster and more efficiently adjudicate removal proceedings”. Judge teams must not act on behalf of the deportation apparatus, but as qualified, impartial reviewers of individual cases.

***What do our faiths say about increasing funding for interior enforcement and detention?***

* 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.
* This perpetuation of suffering offends the dignity of all human beings. Compassionate immigration reforms would help heal our communities and our nation. Congress should invest in long term solutions rather than endless enforcement. Any additional funding for agents, detention beds, and border militarization means permanent, expensive changes to the immigration enforcement machinery and billions of dollars spent without addressing the problem: a punitive, outdated immigration system.

***What do our faiths say about increased funding for border militarization?***

* We are called by our many faith traditions to ensure that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Border security policies should reflect these values and protect human life, tribal sovereignty, sacred sites, and public lands.
* Respect for human and civil rights in border enforcement policies is essential to safeguarding the integrity of our society. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) must be prepared to engage communities with respect and professionalism.
* Over the past twenty years, the federal government has dramatically militarized the U.S.-Mexico border, negatively impacting the civil and human rights of border residents, encouraging racial profiling, and sowing distrust and fear between communities and the law enforcement entities they rely upon for protection. Gone largely unchecked, these operations have stifled the economic vitality and overall well-being of U.S. border communities.
* Current enforcement practices are devastating our communities and congregations, contributing to the deaths of thousands of migrants traveling in remote desert regions, and violating the rights of U.S. citizens and migrants alike. We recommend that Congress and the Administration radically shift federal priorities for and implementation of border security policies.

***What is the faithful response to the budget?***

* Congress has a choice on government spending. President Trump requested billions to hire more immigration enforcement and border patrol agents, permanently expand immigrant detention, further militarize bi-national and indigenous border communities, and build additional wall along the southern border. We call upon Congress to reject this funding and instead to develop bipartisan, comprehensive reform that will offer lasting and real solutions on immigration.
* The budget request is falsely predicated on the notion that immigrants are a burden to U.S. communities and seeks to further ingrain unjust aspects of the U.S. immigration system. The budget request doesn’t offer a roadmap to reforming our outdated and dysfunctional immigration system. Instead of solutions, this budget promotes division and reinforces the false narrative that immigrants and communities of color are a threat to our country.
* The administration has eliminated all prioritization and discretion from the enforcement system.  Every dollar appropriated for ICE and border agents, fugitive operations and immigrant jail space directly supports devastating mass deportation and detention, tools that rip families apart, spread fear and distrust in our communities and sacrifice public safety.
* We can no longer treat funding immigration enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice as business as usual. They have shown that they do not understand the laws they are supposed to implement. This week, the Attorney General had to back down from his threats to undermine and defund public safety in cities and counties across the country. The Secretary of Homeland Security continues to claim his agents have no discretion and no choice but to engage in mass deportation.
* Congress should put a check on the administration and significantly reduce funding for immigration enforcement and detention in the 2018 appropriations bills
* Increasing endless enforcement comes at the expense of robustly funding critical programs.  Education, housing, and nutritional assistance programs promote public safety and alleviate poverty. Poverty-focused international assistance reduces the need for people to have to migrate. Congress has an opportunity to ensure that billions of dollars are not wasted, and instead invested in our collective future.
* Congress should to live up to our shared values and scale back funds for endless immigration enforcement Congress must act. Only Congress has the power to meaningful reform U.S. immigration policies to be just, welcoming, and equitable.