

Dear Members of Congress,

As faith-based organizations, denominations, congregations, and religious leaders across the United States, we stand united against attempts to scale back legal immigration and place stumbling blocks in front of family reunification. We are deeply troubled by the introduction of the RAISE Act by Senators Cotton (R-AR) and Perdue (R-GA), as it would deny millions the opportunity to reunite with family members and contribute to our shared communities. Such efforts ignore the importance of family unity and deny the essential contributions immigrants make that have allowed our country to thrive, strengthen, and welcome new peoples and cultures.

The RAISE Act would permanently cap refugee admissions at 50,000 per year, the lowest resettlement goal in U.S. history, during the largest global refugee crisis in world history. The average annual resettlement goal between when Congress passed the 1980 Refugee Act and today has been 95,000, and the average number of resettled refugees has been 80,000. Turning our backs on the world's most vulnerable and resilient people, at the very time of the greatest need, flies in the face of our values and contradicts the welcome for refugees we see every day in our congregations and communities.

This legislation would impose dramatic cuts to legal immigration, by various estimates between 50 and 70 percent overall and an 85 percent cut to family-based visas, placing nearly insurmountable hurdles in front of families seeking to reunite. The bill claims to shift our current immigration system towards a merit-based approach, but in reality would reduce visas both for employment and family purposes. Such cuts stand against our faith traditions to love our neighbor and welcome the sojourner, and the implementation of these cuts would be devastating to families who are members of our congregations and communities.

Family-based visas are already restricted to spouses, children, parents and siblings of U.S. citizens and spouses and children of Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs, or "green card holders"). Due to tight numerical restrictions, backlogs average seven years and can be as long as 23 years. When it is impossible to access the legal immigration system in a timely way, people resort to entering the United States however they can, including crossing borders illegally and overstaying visas. The RAISE Act would exacerbate this problem by eliminating the ability of U.S. citizens to sponsor their brothers and sisters and making it nearly impossible for them to sponsor their parents. It would also stop green card holders from sponsoring their children over the age of 18 and make all family-based visas harder to access. The bill would delete more than four million individuals' applications for eliminated visas, and bar individuals from applying for U.S. citizenship if their families have not reimbursed the government for any expenses incurred. As people of faith, we believe that a parent's desire to be with their children is real, regardless of age, and that the government should not separate siblings or crush the dreams of those who have waited years and even decades to be reunited with their family members.

The Torah, Quran, and New Testament include many examples of close relationships between adult children and their parents, as well as siblings, demonstrating the importance of a unified family. Many people of faith first learn about the brokenness of the immigration system by witnessing families in their congregations suffer through separation due to visa backlogs, detention, and deportation. America needs, and deserves, an immigration system that prioritizes family unity. We can and must do better than this discriminatory, inhumane bill.

The RAISE Act also eliminates the Diversity Visa, which provides up to 50,000 visas annually for immigrants who do not have access to employment- or family-based visas. Congress established the Diversity Visa in 1990 to encourage and facilitate immigration to the United States from countries with historically low rates of immigration. The program reaches beyond those with family or business ties in the United States and creates a mechanism for racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations to lawfully immigrate that would otherwise not exist. As people of faith, we recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person and lift up the diverse contributions they make to our communities. Eliminating the Diversity Visa would only exacerbate the unjust nature of the U.S. immigration system.

Immigration is integral to the growth of our economy, our schools, and our congregations. Today, immigrants and their families are key members of our communities, serving as religious leaders, teachers,

business owners, and elected officials. Immigration is also a critical component of building a strong American economy. A 2016 study conducted by 14 prominent economists found that immigrants have no negative effects on the wages and employment of native-born workers. In fact, in the long term, immigrants and their families give billions back to the economy and the government. Furthermore, states across the nation rely on immigrants to grow the industries that allow their communities to thrive. Recent studies have concluded that immigrants are entrepreneurs and business-owners at higher rates than native-born Americans, owning three million businesses, generating more than \$65 million a year in income, and employing nearly six million Americans.

As faith-based organizations, denominations, congregations and faith leaders representing millions of constituents across the country, we urge all Members of Congress to reject the RAISE Act, and to instead find real solutions that make our immigration system more accessible and in line with the needs of families and workers. We remember the countless people in Scripture who found homes for themselves and their families in a foreign land. Our faith backgrounds commit us to supporting policy reforms that improve our immigration system and oppose proposals that take us backwards. Together, we stand ready to work with you on immigration reform that strengthens our families, communities, economy, and country.

Sincerely,

National

Church World Service
The Episcopal Church
Presbyterian Church (USA)
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
The Reverend Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Jim Winkler, General Secretary/President, National Council of Churches
Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary, The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Irish Apostolate USA
Christian Community Development Association
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Anti-Defamation League
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
HIAS
Franciscan Action Network
Union for Reform Judaism
National Council of Jewish Women
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Interfaith Worker Justice
Communion of Synodal Catholic Churches
Partnership for Global Justice
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province

Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
National Justice for Our Neighbors
Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees
Unitarian Universalist Association
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Daughters of Charity - USA
Community of the Sisters of St. Anne, St. Marie Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame - CPP Immigration Committee
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Wheaton Franciscans Justice and Peace Office
BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Catholic Committee of the South
Suzanne Akhras, Syrian Community Network
Sister Mary Ehling, Member Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Sister Carmella Campione, Congregation of Saint Joseph
Sr. Danat Brysch, Felician Sisters
Sister DominicaLo Bianco, OSF
Sr. Kathrn Marie Augustyniak, CSSF
Marie Annette Burkart, Sister of Notre Dame de Namur
SM Dorothy Young, Felician Sisters of North America
Rev. Jean McCusker
Dr. Bill Mefford
Carol Blythe, Past President, Alliance of Baptists
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Br. Kevin Cawley
Rev. Lindsay Louise Biddle, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Louise Fortmann
Rev Marci Huntsman
Sister Margaret Bulmer, CCVI
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas West Midwest Community Justice Team
Rev. Michael Neuroth
Paul D. Leichty, MDiv, Congregational Accessibility Network
Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd
Sister Sally Duffy, SC
Union of Presentation Sisters
Susan Krehbiel, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Paulist Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Jill V. Newburg

Alabama

John Czachurski, Huntsville, AL
Rev. Fred L Hammond, Unitarian Universalist Congregation Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa, AL

Arkansas

Rev. Stephen Copley, Little Rock, AR
Elder Sue Ellen Hall, Texarkana, AR

Arizona

PATRICIA Kurtz, Phoenix, AZ
Onna Johnson, West Valley UUC, Sun City, AZ
Carol A. Schurr, Tucson, AZ
Billie K. Fidlin, AZ
UCC Social Justice Committee, AZ
Future AZ Justice for our Neighbors, AZ
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson, AZ
Grace Bunker, Casas Adobes Congregational United Church of Christ, Tucson, AZ
Jo Vredenburg, Desert Palm UCC, Tempe, AZ, Justice and Witness Committee, Tempe, AZ
Rev. Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings, Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona network, Tucson, AZ
Patricia Ferrick, ssnd, Douglas, AZ
Becky Klein, Desert Palm UCC Church, Mesa, AZ
Gordon Schneider, Glendale, AZ
Rabbi, Phoenix, AZ
Imam Ahmad Shqairat, Chandler, AZ
Rev. Delores J Kropf, Tucson, AZ
Rev. Dr. Barbara Doerrer-Peacock, Southwest Conference-United Church of Christ, Phoenix, AZ
Fr. Bill Rimmel, SDS, Tucson, AZ
Rev Edward Walsh, St Teresa of Avila Catholic Community, Phoenix, AZ
Rev. Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, Tucson, AZ
Bishop Elias Galvan, The United Methodist Church, Scottsdale, AZ
Rev. Hannah Adair Bonner, Tucson, AZ
Sister Judy Bourg, SSND, Douglas, AZ
Rev. Kimberly Scott, Phoenix, AZ
Rev. Kenneth Kennon, Christian Church (Disciples), Tucson, AZ
Rev. Beth Rambikur, Phoenix, AZ
Rev. Kate Lehman, St. Teresa of Avila, Phoenix, AZ
Rev. Robin Gail Greentigerman, Phoenix, AZ
Arlene Dominguez, Phoenix, AZ
Rev Susan Princehouse, UCC, Retired, AZ
Rev. Jose Olagues, Phoenix, AZ
Dr. Gay Samuelson, AZ
Joyce Stoffers, Sun City, AZ
Paul Bach, scottsdale, AZ
Church World Services, Peoria, AZ
Linda Rouches, Surprise, AZ
Ella Rawls, JD Immigration Task Force Chair Desert Southwest Conference, Vail, AZ
Rev. Dan R. Johnson, Tucson, AZ

California

Mary Oberg, Palm Springs United Methodist Church, Palm Desert, CA
Sister Judy Flahavan, Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, Santa Barbara, CA
Jewish Family Service of San Diego, San Diego, CA
IWJ San Diego, San Diego, CA
Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay, Berkeley, CA
Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad, CA
Franciscans for Justice, Sacramento, CA
Jean Schafer SDS Salvatorian Advocacy for Victims of Exploitation (S.A.V.E.) Inc, Citrus Heights, CA
CLUE: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles and Orange County, CA
Sister Kay McMullen, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Belmont, CA
Sister Laetitia Bordes, S.H. Society of Helpers, San Bruno, CA
Beacon Presbyterian Fellowship, Oakland, CA
Mindy Berkowitz, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley, Los Gatos, CA
SMary Rogers CSJ, Orange CA, CA

Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA
Timothy M.Dobbins, San Francisco, CA
Robert Pedretti, San Jose, CA
Sister Carole Proctor SND, Oakland, CA
Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman, Palo Alto, CA
Frederic L. Harvey, Berkeley, CA
Fr. Jose Goopio, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, San Diego, CA
Rev. Valerie McEntee, San Bruno, CA
Lenore N. Dowling, IHM, Los Angeles, CA
Rev. Robert McKenzie, Beacon Presbyterian Fellowship, Oakland, CA
Rev. Robert McKenzie, Oakland, CA
Rev. Marcia Tyrivet, Santa Rosa, CA
Rev Dr Beth A Johnson, Vista CA
Elder Merilie Robertson, Canoga Park, CA
the Rev. Ara Guekguezian, First Congregational Church, Fresno, Fresno, CA
Rev. Dr. Dale M Weatherspoon, Easter Hill UMC, Richmond, CA
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Rev. Mary Raine, Coalinga, CA
Paul Feiertag ELCA Retired clergy, CA
Rev. Allan B. Jones, Santa Rosa, CA
Rev. Jerald M. Stinson, Senior Minister Emeritus, First Congregational Church of Long Beach, CA
The Rev. Sandi John, Chico, CA
Father Richard Smith, Ph.D., St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church, San Francisco, CA
Rev. Dr. Randle R. (Rick) Mixon, Palo Alto, CA
Rev. Michele Robbins, Orinda, CA
Rev. Marilyn Chilcote, Oakland, CA
Sister Teresa Davis, CA
Rev. Joellynn Monahan, theSpiralWay.org, Oakland, CA
Rev. Toni Stuart, St. Michael's University Church, Carpinteria, CA
Louise N. Neal, Berkeley Friends Church, Albany, CA
John H Maurer, Emeryville CA
Eileen Robinson, Orange, CA
Philip Di Filippo, Tracy, CA
Sister Patricia Nagle, Alameda, CA
Rev. Manuel C. Simas, St. Joseph Parish Fremont, CA
Brother Lawrence Damien Cos, Chula Vista, CA

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Claire Sheridan, Colorado Springs, Colorado, CO
Ellen Cooney, Clerk, Colorado Springs Religious Society of Friends, Colorado Springs, CO
No More Deaths, Denver, Denver, CO
Together Colorado, CO
Nancy C Fisher, Durango, CO
Rev. Anne Dunlap, Denver, CO
Fr. Edward M. Ruane O.P., Denver, CO
Rev. Gary R. Weaver, Pueblo West, CO
Rev. Jann Halloran, Prairie Unitarian Universalist Church, Parker, CO
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Rev. Daniel Klawitter, Denver, CO
Vicki Witte, Colorado Springs, CO
Elizabeth Douma, Denver, CO
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Congregation Mishkan Israel, Hamden, CT
Rev. Laura Fitzpatrick-Nager, Old Lyme, CT
Rev. Paul Fleck, Hamden, CT
Sister Peg Regan, SSND, Wilton, CT
Rabbi Dr Herbert Brockman, CT
Elaine Betoncourt CSJ, Hartford, CT
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Rev. Ximena Varas, New Haven, CT
Sr. Maryann Calabrese, Norwalk, CT
Ethel Howley, SSND, Wilton, CT

Delaware

La Esperanza, Inc., Georgetown, DE
Basha Silverman, Jewish Family Services of Delaware
Eleanor Horneman, Claymont, DE
Islamic Society of Delaware, Newark, DE
Sarah Green, JFS RISE, Wilmington, DE
Amayuris Perez Velasquez, DE
Donna M. Reed, Camden, DE
Mashoor Awad, Middletown, DE

Florida

United Methodist member, Orlando, FL
Rev. Hiram Irizarry, UCC, (Ret.), Rev. Hiram Irizarry, Chaplain, DOJ (Ret.), FL
Carol Alderson, Gainesville, FL
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice, Miami, FL
Layperson, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Lakeland, FL
Gladys M. Lane, Baker Interfaith Friends, FL
Treasurer, Beacon Hill Fellowship (CBF), Lakeland FL
Nancy K. Metz, Cape Coral, FL
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Dr. Steve Harper, retired United Methodist clergy, FL
Beatrice Caulson, IHM, Gainesville, FL

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Elder Hiram A. Pérez-Cordero, Atlanta, GA
Sister Mary Priniski, OP, Avondale Estates, GA
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Hawaii

Mr., Honolulu, HI
Rev Amy C. Wake, Pearl City, HI

Iowa

Franciscan Peace Center, Clinton, IA
Crossing Borders - Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa, IA
Franciscan Sister, Wheaton, IA
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Iowa Unitarian Universalist Witness/Advocacy Network
Carol Ferrell, Presbyterian, Clive, IA
Rev. John M Caldwell, PhD, First United Methodist Church, Decorah, IA
Bishop Steven L. Ullestad, IA
Sr, Ceal Warner, OP, New Orleans, IA

Idaho

Sandra Storhok, Idaho Falls, ID

Illinois

Sister Beatrice Hernandez, Wheaton, IL
Sister Shirley Krull, Wheaton, IL
Sr. Mary Lou Wirtz, Wheaton, IL
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Inc., Chicago, IL
Tom Cordaro, Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace, Aurora, Illinois, IL
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, US Province, Wheaton, IL
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors, Chicago, IL
Kay L. King, Byron, IL
Marianne Saieg, OSF, Marianne Saieg, OSF, IL
Mary Patrick Salm, Wheaton, Illinois, IL
Project IRENE, Chicago, IL
Sr. Donna Preston, Sisters & Brothers of Immigrants, Chicago, IL
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA – JPIC, IL
Rev. Scott Aaseng, Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois, IL
Carol Devoss, St. Charles, IL
Diane Adam, IL
Rev. Fernando Siaba, Berwyn, IL
REv. Dr. Herbert M. Schafale, United Church of Christ, Belleville, IL
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Sister JoAnn Persch, RSM, Sisters of Mercy, Alsip, IL
Sister Pat M. Murphy, RSM, Sisters of Mercy, Alsip, IL
Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ, Congregation of St. Joseph, La Grange Park, IL
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Rev. Martin Deppe, Chicago, IL, IL
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S. Nancy McCarthy, IL
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Rev. Jason Reed, retired, Naperville, IL
Rev. Michael Mann, St. Andrew United Methodist Carol Stream, Carol Stream, IL
Sister Sylvia Wehlisch, IL

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Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Sr. Mary Lechner, S.P., St.Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Community, Faith and Labor Coalition, Indianapolis, IN
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Rev. John Gibson, Indianapolis, IN
Sister Norma Rocklage, OSF Marian University, Indianapolis, IN
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Wanda Wetli, csj, Tipton, IN
Sister Mary Ann Lechner, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

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Sister Eloise Hertel, OP, Great Bend, KS
Dominican Sisters of Peace, Wichita, KS
Sister Rose Mary Stein OP, KS
Patrick Cameron, Wichita, KS
Sister Janice Thome, Garden City, KS
Carla K White, Church Elder, Chanute, KS
Person of Faith, KS
Sister of St. Joseph, Salina, KS

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Amanda DeWitt, KY
C. Bergman, OPA Dominican Associate, KY
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership, Nazareth, KY
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Debra Braaksma, Louisville KY
Rev. Dwain Lee, Presbyterian Church (USA), Louisville, KY
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Rev. Dr. Peggy C. Hinds, Louisville, KY

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Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger, Center for Ethical Living & Social Justice Renewal, New Orleans, LA
Rev. Barbara Jarrell, All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church Shreveport, Shreveport, LA
Rev. Darcy Roake, Community Church UU, LA

Massachusetts

Marie Esther Health Center, MA
Sister Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM, Watertown, MA

Judith Raymond, Brookline , MA
Ascentria Care Alliance, MA
Joanne Dickey, West Roxbury, MA
Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice, Boston, MA
Sister Pat Andrews, CSJ, The Literacy Connection, Sisters of St. Joseph, Boston, MA
Yvette Bellerose, Sister of St. Anne, Shrewsbury, MA
Sr. Ellen Dabrieo, SNDdeN, Peabody, MA
Marjorie Gardinier, MA
Diane Lauber Doherty, Church of the Covenant, Boston, Boston, MA
Judith T Ward, Stoneham, MA
Reverend Rebecca Bryan, Newton, MA
Anne Laliberte, Spencer, MA
Betty Cawley, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston, MA
Charles Pfeifer, Woburn, MA
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Rev. Gerson Annunciacao, Fall River, MA
Rev. Betsy J. Sowers, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, Cambridge, MA
Sr. Michele Jacques, Marie Anne Center, Worcester, MA
Rev. Charlotte Hendee, East Parish UMC, Salisbury, MA

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Sr. Allyn Marie Horton, SSND, Joppa, MD
Sister Jo-Ann Flora, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Hyattsville MD
DC-Maryland Justice for Our Neighbors, Hyattsville, MD
Cindy Harding, Hyattsville, MD
Kathleen Contino. SND, Stevenson, MD
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, MD
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual, Silver Spring, MD
Shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton, Emmitsburg, MD
St. John's United Methodist Church of Baltimore City, Baltimore, MD
Rev. Alex Vishio, Acting Associate Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference - United Church of Christ, Catonsville, MD
Sr. Ilaria Buonriposi, Baltimore, MD
Sister Linda Stilling SSND, Baltimore, MD
Sister Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ, Reisterstown, MD
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Roland England, Boonsboro, MD
Rev. Dr. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon, Trinity United Methodist Church, Frederick, MD

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Rev. Allen Ewing-Merrill, Portland, ME
karen stickney, Lewiston, ME
Rev. Samuel M. Johnson, Wells, ME

Michigan

Justice for Our Neighbors Southeastern Michigan, Beverly Hills, MI
Sr. Grace Keane, OSF, MI
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, MI

Sr. Mary Ellen Bennett, Dominican Sisters of Peace, Oxford, MI
Rev. Chris Rothbauer, Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Houghton, MI
The Rev. Marcia Ledford, Ypsilanti, MI
Sister Nancy Marie Jamroz, Felician Sisters of North America, MI

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Jen Vertanen, St. Paul, MN
Reverend Sharon Prestemon; Conference Minister; Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
Diane Haines, MN
Rev. Robert Munneke, Aitkin, MN
Donald Britt, Princeton, MN
Father Harry j Bury, St Paul, MN
Rev. Thomas Uphaus, La Crescent, MN
Eric Paul Jacobsen, W Saint Paul, MN

Missouri

Sister Sharon Schmitz, RSM, St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA), St. Louis, MO
Gospel Justice Committee, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, MO
Sister Mairlyn Gottemoeller, RSM, St. Louis, MO
Sister Carol Boschert, Gospel Justice Group, O'Fallon, MO
Rev. Tyler Connoley, Saint Louis, MO
Sister Julie Cutter, St. Louis, MO
Rev. Bob Atkinson, Independence, MO
Rev. Steven Andrews, Parkville, MO

Mississippi

Sr. Emily Morgan, RSM, MS

Montana

Sanctuary Rising Billings, Red Lodge, Mt., MT
Josh and Sally Dickinson, Bozeman, MT

North Carolina

Connie H. Orander, Cary, NC
Carolyn Mary Coll, Charlotte, NC
Rev, Ashley Calhoun, retired United Methodist clergy, NC
Rev. Dr. Douglas E. Wingeier, Asheville, NC
Rev. Ismael Ruiz-Millán, North Carolina Conference UMC, Durham, NC
Rev. Jaye White, Fayetteville, NC
Joey Haynes, Charlotte, NC
Rev Dr Mikael Broadway, Durham, NC

North Dakota

Sr. Mary Rassley, ND

Nebraska

Grace Lutheran Church, Omaha, NE

Andrea Paret, Peace with Justice Coordinator, Great Plains Conference, United Methodist Church,
Norfolk, Nebraska
Jo Lux, Madison, NE
Church Women United, Hastings, NE
Rev. Dr. Damon Laaker, Omaha, NE
United Methodist Church, Hastings, NE

New Hampshire

NH Conference UCC Immigration Working Group, Pembroke, NH
Claudia Istel, NH
The Rev. Grace Burson, Nashua, NH
Rev Mark Ferrin, Keene, NH
Rev. Maren Tirabassi, Portsmouth, NH

New Jersey

Rev. Jean Paul Richter, Cedar Grove, NJ
Sister patricia Jelly, O.P., Asbury Park, N.J.
Nelly Torres-Ibanez , parrishoner, Cherry Hill, NJ
Michael Kanarek, NJ
Rev. Carroll Arkema, Pompton Lakes, NJ
Barbara Long, NJ
Peace and Justice Ministry, St. Mary Parish, Cherry Hill, NJ
Rev. Carole Boutwell, NJ
craig clark, fort lee, NJ
Rev. Jeremy T. Campbell, Metuchen, NJ
Rev. Jeff Edwards, Parsippany, NJ
Robert Keller, Lay Leader Parsippany United Methodist Church, Parsippany, NJ
Mickey Steinitz, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Collingswood, NJ, Collingswood, NJ
Rev Melissa Hinnen, Long Branch, NJ
Rev. Charles Boyer, Woodbury, NJ
Rev Russell Eidmann-Hicks, Holmdel, NJ
Antonelle Chunka, Spotswood, NJ

New Mexico

Rev. Dr. Antonio Aja, Santa Fe, NM
Sr. Joan Brown,osf, Albuquerque, NM
Sister Joan Quinn, NM
Sr. Marlene Perrotte, rsm, Albuquerque, NM
Rev. Dr. Suzanne Redfern-Campbell, Unitarian Univesalist Church of Las Cruces, Las Cruces, NM
Rev. Talitha Arnold, Santa Fe, NM
Sister Angela Ybarra, Albuquerque, NM

New York

The Rev. Dr. C David Williams/retired, NY
Sister Catherine Talia, NYC, NY
Sister M. Amelia Pieczynski, Buffalo NY
Patricia W Tingley, NY
Sr.Alice Marie Giordano, New Rochelle, NY
Cabrinian Immigrant Services of NYC, Manhattan, NY
Josal Diebold, Grand Island, NY
Pat Lucas, CSJ Brentwood, NY
The Church of the Village, NYC, Local, NY

The Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore, Manhasset, NY
NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration reform, New York City, NY
Sister Teresa Raftery, IHM, NY
Sister Mary Louis Rustowicz, NY
Kelly Quinn, IHM, Manhasset, NY
Judith O'Connor, OSU, Jamaica, NY
Karen A Killeen, RN, Sleepy Hollow, NY
Rev. Bruce E. Tischler, New Rochelle, NY
Sister Rosalie A. Carven, Chairperson Sisters of St. Joseph Justice Committee, Brentwood, NY
Rev. Christopher De La Cruz, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, New York, NY
Sr. Diane Olmstead, MSC, NY
Nancy Fackner Sister of St. Joseph, Brentwood, New York, NY
Valerie Heinonen, o.s.u., New York City, NY
Rev. Jeniffer Rodríguez, Ossining, NY
Rev. John P. Martin, NY
Rev. Fr. Joseph Varghese, Syrian Orthodox Church, Albany, NY
Rabbi Michael E Feinberg, New York, NY
Lee Ann Grace, Elder, University Presbyterian, Buffalo, NY
Rev. Laurie Stuart, Narrowsburg, NY
Rev. Melodie Long, Sackets Harbor, NY
University United Methodist Church, Buffalo, NY
Kathleen Moore, Albany, NY
Rev. William Brisotti, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Church, Wyandanch, NY
Rev. Miriam Shelton, Ft. Washington Heights PC, New York, NY
Br. Michael Potvin-Frost, OFH, Plattsburgh, NY
Rev. Paul Dreher-Wiberg, Warners, NY
Rev. Mark Lukens, LI Chapter, The Interfaith Alliance; Bethany Congregational Church, East Rockaway
Merle Showers, Buffalo, NY
Elder Maria Studer, Levittown, NY
CSJ Non-Violence community, New York, NY
Sister Christina Marie Luczynski, Syracuse, NY
Rev. Taryn Mattice, Ithaca, NY
Janet S Matthews, Rockville Centre, NY
Sister Conchetta LoPresti, OSF, Williamsville, NY
Margaret M Barrett, OSU, NY

Ohio

Sharon Gaeth Nichols, North Canton, OH
Sr. Madonna Hoying, SFP, Cincinnati, Ohio
Josie Chrosniak, HM, Humility of Mary JPIC Office, Cleveland, OH
Karen Hartman, SFP, Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, Cincinnati, OH
Sister Patricia Gardner, Toledo, OH
Carole Dugan, Lima, OH
Rev. Dan Bryant, Lakewood, OH
Van Farowe Dean, Cleveland, OH
Fr. Vincent Petersen OFM Conv., Carey, OH
Sister Gene Poore, OP, Columbus, OH
Sr. Joan Supel, OP (Dominican Sisters of Peace, Columbus, OH
Judith Engel, Columbus, OH
Kelly Litt, Justice Promoter, Dominican Sisters of Peace, Columbus, OH
MaryJo Tol. En Camino, migrant and immigrant outreach, OH
Rev. Oommen K Thomas, Strongsville, OH
Sharon Havelak OSF, Sylvania, OH
Sister Sheila Marie Tobbe, Lyndhurst, OH
Amy McFrederick OP, Akron, OH

Oklahoma

Rev. Nancy Sharp, Oklahoma City, OK
Catherine Darcy, RSM, Ada, OK
Rev. Gerald L. Davis, Church of the Restoration Unitarian Universalist, Tulsa, OK
Rev. Dr. Kirt E. Moelling, St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, Broken Arrow, OK
Rev. Kayla Bonewell, Oklahoma City, OK
Rev. Dwight Welch, United Church of Norman UCC, Norman, OK
Rev. Dr. Suzanne W Nichols, Oklahoma City, OK

Oregon

Social Justice Team, West Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Portland, OR
Ainsworth United Church of Christ, Portland, OR
Rae Anne Lafrenz, Portland, OR
Immigrant Justice Action Group-First Unitarian Portland, Portland, OR
Claudia Roberts, Peace with Justice Coordinator, Portland, OR
Rev. Kathy Keener, First Presbyterian Church, Pendleton, OR
Rev. Dr. Lorne Bostwick, Senior Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Eugene, OR
Rev. M. Lynne Smouse, Portland, OR
Rev. Dennis James Sagun Parker, Portland, OR
Rev. Dr. Sally L. Godard, McMinnville, OR

Pennsylvania

Sr. Janet Jeffers, I.H.M., Scranton, PA
Eleanor Marconi, Scranton, PA
Sister Mindy Welding, IHM, Scranton, PA
Jean Louise Bachetti, IHM, PA
Sr. Anne Mary, IHM, Scranton, PA
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA, Philadelphia, PA
Sr. Carol Lubas IHM, Scranton, PA
Reb Sarah Cohen, Philadelphia, PA
Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network, Harrisburg, PA
HIAS Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Ms. Karen Paulus, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA
Sr. Madeline Swaboski, IHM, Scranton, PA
Yvonne Marlier, Jenkintown, PA
Society Hill Synagogue, Philadelphia, PA
Shelley Chamberlain, Elkins Park, PA
Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches, Harrisburg, PA
Avi Vardi, Philadelphia, PA
Sister Mary Norbert Long, Greensburg, PA
Sister Suzanne Gallagher, RSM - Midatlantic Community of Sisters of Mercy, PA
Sr. Patt Walsh OHM, Scranton, PA
Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Villa Maria, PA
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, PA
Margie Chachkin, Maple Glen, PA
Rabbi Alan LaPayover, Philadelphia, PA
Deacon Carol Detweiler, Gilbertsville, PA
Rev. Charlotte H. Whiting, Lancaster, PA
United Church of Christ Pastor, Lewisburg, PA
Rabbi Gregory S Marx, Congregation Beth Or, PA
Rev. Leah Knox, PA
Lenore Thomas, IHM, Scranton, PA

Sr. Mary, St. Dennis, Bethlehem, PA
Sr. Mary Mercy, Sisters of IHM, PA
Rabbi Maurice Harris, Elkins Park, PA
Rev. DVMcFarland, Pittsburgh, PA
Rev. Bryant Brown, Thomas Paine Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Collegeville, PA
Rev. Mary Schmotzer, Shiloh United Church of Christ, Danville, PA
Rev. Anthony W Janton. OLHC Catholic church, Abington, PA
Pamela Kerns - Christian Education Director, Kingston, PA
Mrs. Pam Short, Mission Leader Felician Services, Blairsville, Derry Township Westmorland County, PA
Rabbi Rachel Kobrin, Elkins Park, PA
Rabbi Robert S Leib, Abington, PA
Rabbi Elliot Holin, Elkins Park, PA
Rev. John Woodcock, West Chester, PA
Sister Jane Snyder, IHM, Scranton, PA
Casa San Jose, Pittsburgh, PA
Betty P. Schwarz, Pittsburgh, PA
Suzanne Polen, Pittsburgh, PA

Rhode Island

Janet Davies, RI

South Carolina

Pastor Carleatha Benson, UMC - SC ELCC Chair, Lake City, SC
Sister Johnna Ciezobka CSSF Felician Sisters, Kingstree, SC
Rev. Emily Sutton, Bethel and Philadelphia United Methodist Church, Rock Hill, SC
Rev. Kristin Dollar, Faith United Methodist Church, Greenville, SC, SC

South Dakota

Rev. Jean McCusker, Sioux Falls, SD

Tennessee

Rev. Dr. Gordon D. Gibson, Knoxville, TN
Raul B., Alegria, MARCHA United Methodist Church, Franklin, TN

Texas

CDR Steven M. Lanoux, Ph.D., Port Aransas, TX
Dr. Charles Rives, Denton, TX
Cynthia Rives, Denton, TX
Dalila Reynoso, Tyler, Texas, TX
Rev. Chuck Freeman, Executive Director Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, Austin, TX
Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Women, Ft Worth, TX
Ms. Marty Vaughan, Jonesville, TX
Anne Barker, BPFNA-LaPaz, Fort Worth, TX
John Morris, St. John's UMC, Georgetown, TX
Larry L Smith, Live Oak UU Church, Cedar Park, TX
Thomas McPhail Ubaldo, Richmond, TX
Rev. Dr. Edward Kern, San Antonio, TX
Bishop Michael Rinehart, TX
The Rev. David A. Roschke, Houston, TX
Sister Rosemarie Goins, Felician Franciscan, Laredo, TX
Rev. Ingrid Akers, Marvin UMC, Tyler, TX

Rev. Jonathan Britt, Houston, TX
Sister Sharon Altendorf, San Antonio, TX
Pastor Kris Bair, Corpus Christi, TX
Rev Dr Elizabeth Nash, Heart of Texas Association, United Church of Christ, Austin, TX
Rev. Lora BrandisTX
Rev. Scottie McIntyre Johnson, San Marcos UU Fellowship, San Marcos, TX
Thomas J Norris, Santa Rosa de Lima, Austin, Texas, TX
Rev. Judy Brock, Frisco, TX
Rev. Dr. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, Houston, TX
Rev Michael Redmond, Kerens, TX
Rev. Shari Woodbury, Westside Unitarian Universalist Church, Fort Worth, TX
Rev. Suzanne F. Isasacs, San Antonio Region Justice For Our Neighbors, San Antonio, Texas, TX
Ruth McPhail Ubaldo, Richmond, TX
Sister Dorothy Moczygemba, St. Clare Church, San Antonio, TX
Rev. Katherine Cook, TX
Bishop Ray Tiemann, TX
Rev. Tricia Tedrow, San Antonio, TX
Dora Gonzalez, Austin, TX

Utah

Rev. Steven A. Klemz, Salt Lake City, UT
Rev. Ray Kerley, Murray Baptist Church, Murray, UT

Virginia

Sheila Clark, Unitarian, Locust Grove, VA
Just Neighbors Ministry, VA
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Richmond, VA
Rev. Timothy J. Hickey, Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, Arlington, VA
Susan Calhoun-Sousie, Fredericksburg, VA
Cheryl W. Moore, Arlington, VA
Linda Mashburn, member of the Baptist Peace Fellowship, Abingdon, VA
Clint Holt, St. Paul UMC Church Council, Woodbridge VA
Rabbi Jeffrey Saxe, Falls Church, VA
Lana Heath de Martinez, M.Div., Richmond, VA
Father Les Schmidt, Glenmary, Big Stone Gap, VA
Rev. Dr. Debra W. Hafner, Reston, VA
Rev. Dr. Jean Wright, Fairfax, VA
Rev. Susan Graceson, Falls Church, VA
Jennifer Phinney, Fredericksburg, VA
Steve Rabson, Fredericksburg, VA

Washington

AIDA Bound, MSW, Wenatchee, WA
Charlene Hudon, SP, Seattle, WA
Jewish Family Service of Seattle, WA
Nancy Horman, Seattle, WA
Maggie Finley, Chaplain Emeritus, Seattle, WA
Rev. James R. Bridges (retired), Everett, WA
Rev. Wendy Taylor UCC retired, Olympia, WA
Rev. Thomas Quigley, Retired President Director, Church Council of Greater Seattle, Seattle, WA
Bishop Kirby Unti, WA
Chaplain Mir Plemmons, WA

Washington, DC

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington DC
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Washington, DC
Bro. Brian McLauchlin, Washington, DC
Marie Dennis, co-president, Pax Christi International, Washington, DC
Rev. Maria Swearingen, Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Rabbi Elizabeth Richman, Jews United for Justice, Washington, DC
Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, Washington DC
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Washington, DC

Wisconsin

Rev. Robert Harman, Danbury, WI
Sr. Cecilia Fandel, Ladysmith, WI
Ramona Dombrowski, CSSF, Milwaukee, WI
Racine Dominicans, WI
Wisconsin Conference UCC, DeForest, WI
SSSF, Milwaukee, WI
A Ruling Elder in the PCUSA, Neenah, WI
member of the Felician Sisters, Manitowoc, WI
Mary Anne Gerlach, First United Methodist Church, Whitewater, WI
Beth Moore, La Crosse, WI
Rev. Dr. Charles A. Wolfe, UCC (retired) Prescott, Wisconsin
Bishop Gerald Mansholt, Appleton, WI
Dr. David W. Scott, Neenah, WI
Rev. Dr. Dan Dick, Sun Prairie, WI
Pastor Frederick Trost, President of the Wisconsin Conference, United Church of Christ
Franz Rigert, Conference Minister Wisconsin UCC, DeForest, WI
Rev Jack W. Kraaz, WI
sister lois aceto, racine, WI
Lisa Hart, Associate Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference UCC, Fitchburg, WI
Rev. Sonja L. Ingebritsen, Madison, WI
Sister Mary Ellen Paulson, O.P., Racine, WI
Bishop Paul Erickson, Milwaukee, WI
Sister Paula Marie Jarosz, O.P., Racine, WI
Sister Ruth Battaglia CSA, WI
Rev. Tom Williams, Whitefish Bay, WI
susan elias, madison, WI
Kenneth Foote, WI

West Virginia

Congregation of St. Joseph, Wheeling, WV
Judith Ann Teufel, CSJ, Charleston, WV