

# INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION

African American Ministers in Action  
American Baptist Home Mission Societies  
of the American Baptist Churches,  
USA  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Jewish Committee  
Bread for the World  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Refugee and Immigration Ministries

Christian Reformed Church in North  
America  
Church of the Brethren  
Church World Service  
CLINIC | Catholic Legal Immigration  
Network, Inc.  
Columban Center for Advocacy and  
Outreach  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Daughters of Charity, St Louise Province  
The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Franciscan Action Network  
Friends Committee on National  
Legislation  
HIAS  
Ignatian Solidarity Network  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Irish Apostolate USA  
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the  
United States  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Leadership Conference of Women  
Religious  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee  
Service  
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 Office  
Scalabrini International Migration  
Network /Center for Migration Studies  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Sojourners  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human  
Rights  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association of  
Congregations  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Church of Christ, Justice and  
Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board  
of Church & Society  
UNITED SIKHS  
World Relief

## Interfaith Immigration Coalition Platform

Our diverse faith traditions compel us to welcome one another with love and compassion, regardless of place of birth, religion, or race. All of us are called to love our neighbor – all of our neighbors. Generations of immigrants and refugees have made this country great with their ideas, hard work, resilience, and traditions. U.S. policies on immigration and refugee resettlement should recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of immigrants and refugees, ensuring justice and protection for all.

We call on the Administration and Congress to enact humane and equitable reforms. Each day in our congregations, direct service programs, health care facilities, and schools, we witness the human consequences of a broken 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, feel like targets. This suffering offends the dignity of all human beings. Compassionate immigration reforms will help heal our communities and our nation.

The Torah tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34). In the Christian Bible, Jesus commands us to welcome the stranger, for "what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me" (Matthew 25:40). The Qur'an directs us to "do good to...those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet" (4:36). The Hindu Taittiriya Upanishad reminds us: "The guest is a representative of God" (1.11.2).

Our platform is rooted in these interfaith principles, which call us to ensure that our laws promote and protect the dignity of each individual. We look for policies that:

### **Prioritize family unity**

Families are the basic unit of strong communities. Unified families bring stability to individual households and strengthen neighborhoods and communities. Family members help one another navigate a new culture, pursue job opportunities, start businesses, and contribute economically, socially, and spiritually to society. As faith communities, we know that every family deserves stability and security. Children should not have to live with the fear of their parents being taken away from them at any moment. As we reform our laws to prioritize keeping families together, our communities will grow healthier and stronger.

### **Create a process that leads to legal status and citizenship**

Our faith communities include people from many countries and many economic backgrounds, and we value our friends' and neighbors' contributions regardless of their wealth, race, religion, or where they were born. Any meaningful reform of our immigration system must include a fair process that allows existing undocumented immigrants and their families the opportunity to earn lawful permanent residency with a pathway to citizenship. The opportunity for attainable

citizenship will serve to stabilize families, communities, and local economies, and will reaffirm our faith and national values.

### **Improve access to the legal immigration system**

When immigrants are held in prolonged limbo at the hands of the legal immigration system, our communities cannot flourish. We seek naturalization and citizenship procedures that are affordable, accessible, and expedient with respect to due process. Expanding visa availability, increasing the number of ports of entry, allocating resources for more immigration attorneys and judges, and eliminating application backlogs will reduce the undue burden on immigrants traversing the legal immigration system. All immigrants have a right to access legal representation, including children. Financial support to state and local governments and community organizations that offer language and civics education, outreach, and immigration legal assistance can empower immigrants to navigate the system. Strengthening our legal asylum processes and refugee resettlement program will help our national community respond in a humane way to those most vulnerable among us.

## **Protect all workers and reduce exploitation**

Migrant workers are an asset to our country, contributing necessary skills and labor for our communities and economy. All workers benefit from the enforcement of health, safety, and wage-and-hour laws, as well as the right to peacefully organize. Employers should be held accountable to abide by labor protections and standards for all workers, regardless of status. As faithful people, we seek policies that decrease immigrants' vulnerabilities to exploitation and reduce unfair or discriminatory hiring and firing practices. Citizens and migrants alike have the right to be treated with dignity by their employers.

## **Emphasize community safety**

Policies that strengthen relationships between local law enforcement and the community are essential for public safety. Separating local policing from immigration enforcement promotes the safety of the whole community. Immigrants, family members of immigrants, and individuals perceived to be immigrants should not be vulnerable when interacting with police, or fear retribution if they report being victim or witness to a crime. As we focus on building more inclusive communities, we support local and federal policing reforms that seek to eliminate racial profiling and disproportionate targeting of communities of color. We encourage policies that emphasize effective community-driven policing for the safety of all community members, citizens and non-citizens alike.

## **Protect human rights in enforcement practices and border policies**

We are called by our many faith traditions to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and integrity. We seek interior enforcement and border policies that reflect these values and protect human life, tribal sovereignty and sacred sites, and environmental standards. Adequate training and continuing education for all law enforcement officials, with a focus on the protection of human and civil rights, are essential to preserving the safety and security of our communities.

## **Ensure 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. Many immigrants are long-time residents of U.S. communities with old or minor criminal convictions who have since created families and become vital members of their communities. Our many faiths compel us to build communities of redemption and wholeness. Sound policy allows for the proper use of prosecutorial and judicial discretion thus ensuring that immigrants who pose no real threat to public safety or national security will not be detained or deported from their communities.

## **Reform detention policies**

People of faith who accompany or represent immigrants in detention facilities witness firsthand the toll incarceration takes on those detained, their families, and our communities. As long as immigrants are detained, facility conditions must be improved and access to due process must be upheld. We support policies that promote the use of community-based alternatives to detention and prevent the detention of immigrants. Vulnerable individuals, such as children and asylum seekers, should be sheltered in non-restrictive environments and never in detention facilities.

## **Protect vulnerable populations in the U.S. and abroad**

Among communities of faith, our shared call to "welcome the stranger" has brought us together in support of the protection of those who seek refuge within our borders and around the world. All those fleeing conflict and persecution, including human trafficking survivors and other vulnerable populations, deserve the opportunity to pursue safe, productive, and fruitful lives. We support policies that ensure individuals maintain the right to seek protection within our borders and that our policies do not force them to return them to deadly or dangerous conditions or to be handed over to persons who seek to exploit them. Sheltering and providing for the most vulnerable among us must be upheld in U.S. domestic and foreign policies by addressing the perpetuation of the root causes of forced migration. All people have the right to migrate, as well as the right to flourish in their home countries.

## **Facilitate immigrant and refugee integration**

Communities are strongest when we welcome and support one another. When provided the assistance they need to rebuild their lives, immigrants and resettled refugees open businesses, revitalize towns, and contribute economically, socially, and spiritually to our communities. Immigrants should have easy access to support systems that allow them to feel part of their community, including having proper access to education, healthcare, emergency services, and social services.

## **Strive for lasting solutions**

We will continue to press Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to pass legislation that protects the God-given dignity and rights of every human being, including migrants, immigrants, and refugees. As we work toward these real solutions, let us together build a future that values the unity of all families, protects the safety of all communities, and brings people together rather than tearing them apart. As a matter of faith, we are called to act.