

February 11, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S – 221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As **48** faith-based organizations from many traditions, we are called to love our neighbor and to welcome the stranger. We are heartbroken that more than one million immigrant youth are at risk of deportation and urge Congress to immediately pass a bipartisan pathway to citizenship that protects Dreamers from deportation.

The faith community strongly reaffirms our support for the Dream Act which would provide a standalone pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth. We have encouraged Congress to pass such legislation for over a decade. Alternatively, we believe the USA Act, championed by Senator McCain (R-AZ) and Representative Hurd (R-TX), while imperfect, is a bipartisan, bicameral compromise piece of legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship. We do not agree that increased border enforcement or collaboration between local, tribal, and state law enforcement with CBP will make our border communities safer, especially without increased accountability and oversight. However, we do value that the included border provisions aspire to be data-driven, accountable, uphold the rule of law, and recognize the importance of consultation with border communities. This is absent in other proposals.

In light of Senate floor action next week, we are compelled to outline our strong opposition to the proposals currently advocated by the Trump Administration which we fundamentally object to based on ancient religious principles and sacred texts.

The following White House proposal runs contrary to our shared faith values by:

- **Separating families.** The faith community opposes the Administration's proposal to eliminate green card programs for any relatives other than spouses or minor children. This would permanently ban families from reuniting in the United States, rather than remedying existing prolonged family separation at the hands of a burdensome system. We reject the redefinition of the "nuclear" family because we know siblings, adult children, and adult parents are all critical members of a family. Members of Congress should champion efforts to recognize, support, and protect family unity in every avenue of the immigration system.
- **Undermining asylum access.** The faith community opposes the White House proposal that would force children, mothers, and fathers to be turned back into the hands of traffickers, gangs, and others who seek to exploit them. As people of faith, we cannot close our doors or turn our backs on children, individuals, or families fleeing violence or persecution. We cannot barter the safety of Dreamers for the safety of unaccompanied children. All people are sacred in the eyes of God.

- **Drastically cutting legal immigration.** The faith community opposes the Administration's proposal to significantly reduce the number of immigrants welcomed to this nation. Likewise, we believe it is fundamentally unjust to provide preferential treatment to immigrants based on wealth and privilege at the expense of family. Such a move fails to recognize the economic and social contributions that all immigrants make to our country, regardless of their race, faith, national origin, gender, skill type, or educational attainment.
- **Exacerbating the suffering of border communities and migrants.** The proposal would expand unchecked border enforcement policies which 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.

Using the desperation of immigrant youth to push through destructive policies that undermine other immigrant and border communities violates our values and fails to promote the common good. We urge Congress to stand with Dreamers and immediately enact a pathway to citizenship. We also ask you to remember that any legislative solution must honor the core tenets of human dignity and family unity.

Sincerely,

African American Ministers In Action  
 Alliance of Baptists  
 American Baptist Home Mission Societies  
 American Friends Service Committee  
 Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
 Bread for the World  
 Christian Community Development Association  
 Church World Service  
 Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
 Conference of the Presentation Sisters  
 Conventual Franciscan Friars - Province of Our Lady of Consolation  
 Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)  
 Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
 Ecumenical Poverty Initiative  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Advocacy Office  
 Faith In Public Life  
 Franciscan Action Network  
 Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, US Area  
 Franciscans for Justice  
 Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)  
 Ignatian Solidarity Network  
 Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
 Interfaith Worker Justice  
 Islamic Society of North America  
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
 Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology  
 Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
 Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Justice for Our Neighbors  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Pax Christi USA  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
Sisters of Charity, BVM  
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, USA Province  
Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration  
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
The Episcopal Church  
The Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
UURISE - Unitarian Universalist Refugee & Immigrant Services & Education