

July 18, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

As more than 200 faith leaders and faith-based organizations from many different traditions, we write out of grave concern for the House Appropriations Committee's fiscal year 2018 budget proposals for the [Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS) and the Department of Health and Human Service's [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) (ORR). Together, we call on elected officials to support funding for refugee protection and resettlement, and to oppose funding for the administration's mass deportation force, for expanded immigration detention, and for border militarization. Instead of continuing unnecessary detention and dangerous deportation policies, we must carry on our nation's proud history of hospitality and moral leadership.

As people of faith, our concern stems from shared values rooted in our sacred texts that remind us to love our neighbor and welcome the sojourner among us. As Leviticus 19:33-34 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." The sacred responsibility of our government is the well-being of the human person, and we recognize the dignity and humanity of all of our immigrant community members.

The United States has a proud legacy of welcoming refugees and immigrants, and we recognize the valuable contributions they bring to our communities and economy. Yet, the [administration](#) and the proposed House budgets would significantly cut funds for refugee assistance overseas and resettlement in the United States, including an almost 39% cut to programs that support local schools and successfully help refugees find employment. At the same time, the budgets target immigrants for enforcement to sweep families, people who have lived in the United States for years, into detention and place them at immediate risk of deportation. The House budget proposes an increase of \$1.6 billion for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for additional new Border Patrol agents and to meet the administration's request to initiate construction of the U.S.-Mexico border wall. Adding billions of dollars for CBP agents does not represent a faithful way forward.

The dramatic militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border region has already stifled the economic vitality and overall well-being of U.S. border communities. The construction of a new physical barrier or border walls serves only to harm American communities, businesses, and landowners. Border wall construction would also be exorbitant, with an estimated initial cost of \$21 billion in total. The United States already protects our national security interests and upholds the integrity of our boundaries, spending more than [\\$18 billion](#) on immigration enforcement, more than all other federal law enforcement agencies combined. New funding to expand the border wall and further militarize immigration enforcement are counterproductive, wasteful, and morally reprehensible.

The House budget would also separate families and create terror across our communities. The proposed funding would provide an additional \$619.7 million for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hire 1,000 new ICE officers, significantly expand the detention and mass deportation of our immigrant neighbors, and expand the harmful 287(g) program to pressure local police to serve as federal immigration enforcement. America is safer when we pursue policies that strengthen trust and cooperation between local law enforcement and all residents, including immigrants. Many cities already recognize the deep correlation between local police opting out of enforcing ICE detainer requests and an increase in public safety, all because of the improved trust in its police force. Without the trust and cooperation of all community members, local police face challenges in investigating crimes, apprehending those truly guilty of committing crimes, and deterring potential criminal activity. In contrast, 287(g) agreements only exacerbate these challenges, as suspicion and fear of interacting with police undermines community policing efforts, makes community members reluctant to report a crime they witness or are victim to, and thus reduces public safety.

DHS has already proven that it cannot responsibly carry out its functions by targeting all undocumented immigrants, including a [Methodist lay leader in Kansas](#), a [mother in Arizona](#), and a [beneficiary of the](#)

[Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) program](#). ICE and CBP agents have also operated with [impunity](#) for years, and it is imperative they do not receive additional funding to squander ineffectively and without transparency, accountability, or humanity. We cannot live out our sacred honor to care for the most vulnerable while hundreds of individuals are being detained and processed for deportation. Beyond the long-term damage caused by these immigration policies, funding for endless enforcement comes at the expense of vital community programs like education, housing, and nutritional assistance programs that promote public safety and alleviate poverty.

Our faith has taught and called us to welcome without discrimination and love our neighbors - including our refugee and immigrant neighbors. We stand together with our refugee and our immigrant brothers and sisters, and urge you to oppose any budget that cuts refugee resettlement funds, or funds mass detention, deportation of our immigrant neighbors, and border militarization. As communities of faith, we call on you to find compassion in your discernment process and think about the moral imperative to love our neighbor, welcome the sojourner, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

#### Faith-based Organizations

All Saints Church  
Alliance of Baptists  
AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETIES  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Muslim Professionals of Dallas  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Ascentria Care Alliance  
Asian American Pacific Islander Christians for Social Justice  
Bethany House of Hospitality  
Billings Sanctuary Rising  
Bread for the World  
Christ Ministry Center  
Christian Community Development Association (CCDA)  
Christians for United Communities  
Church Women United  
Church World Service  
CLUE: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Congregational Church of Brookfield  
CSSF  
Dane Sanctuary Coalition (Madison, Wisconsin)  
Dominican Sisters of Houston  
Faith Voices for Justice  
Felician Sisters of North America  
Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform  
Foster Care Project, All Saints Church  
Franciscan Action Network  
Franklin Federated Church  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
FUS  
General Board of Global Ministries  
HIAS  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters - USA, JPIC  
Ignatian Solidarity Network  
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice

Interfaith Welcome Coalition  
Interfaith Worker Justice - New Mexico  
Interfaith Worker Justice San Diego  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Family & Children's Service  
Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester  
Jews United for Justice  
Justice for Our Neighbors Southeastern Michigan  
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mass Interfaith Worker Justice  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Middleton Community United Church of Christ  
Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ  
Mission Services, Our Lady of Hope Province of Felician Sisters of North America  
Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Justice for Our Neighbors  
Needlework for Noglaes Children  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
Office of Public Witness, Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Oregon Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice  
Pax Christi International  
Pax Christi USA  
School Sisters of Notre Dame - CPP Shalom/JPIC  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Inc.  
Sisters IHM  
Sisters of the Holy Family  
Sojourners  
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice  
St. Thomas University Center for Community Engagement  
The Hat Project  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Toberman Neighborhood Center  
Uja-Federation of New York  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
Voz Hispana Cambio Comunitario  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
Women of Reform Judaism National Board

#### Faith Leaders

Sister Sharon Altendorf, PBVM  
Pastor Dawn Anderson, Highland Park United Methodist Church  
Rev. Donna Aros, Frankfort St. Paul UMC  
Rev. Dr. Neddy Astudillo, Parroquia San José  
Mary Faith Balawejder, Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Local Leader in W PA , Felician Sisters of N America  
Wayne Bank, Vice Chair Leadership Team, Detroit Conference, United Methodist Church  
Rev. Dr. Karen S. Boehk - The United Methodist Church Karen Boehk, Rio Texas Conference of The

United Methodist Church  
Rev. Sherry Brady, First United Methodist Church  
Rev Adam Briddell, First United Methodist Church of Eugene Oregon  
Rev. Cynthia Bumb, United Church of Christ  
Rev Laura Byrch, Boone UMC  
Sister Cathy Campbell, Sp, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Faith Formation Team, Indianapolis  
Reverend Edward Carpenter, St. Joseph Catholic Church  
Mary Casper, Coordinator of PaxChristiDenver  
Senior Pastor Reverend Dr. Neil Cazares-Thomas, Cathedral of Hope UCC  
Elder Kristen Chesmore, Bellevue Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Catharine Cline, Retired - United Church of Christ  
The Venerable Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul Episcopal  
Sister Patricia Corbett, Congregation of St. Joseph  
The Rev. Frank Corbishley, Chapel of the Venerable Bede (Episcopal Church)  
Director Lawrence Couch, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
Minister Kenneth Davidson, Newton Church of the Brethren, Newton, KS  
Margaret Dillner, Social Concerns Chairperson of Congregation, New Ark United Church of Christ  
Arlene Dominguez, Director of Shadow Rock Sanctuary Ministry, Shadow Rock UCC  
The Very Reverend Todd Donatelli, The Cathedral of All Souls  
Laura Dravenstott, St. Andrew United Methodist Church  
United Methodist Young Adult Missionary Isaac Dunn  
Vonny Eckman, Member Board of Directors, Penn Central Conference, United church of Christ, St. Paul's  
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Rev. David Farley, Director of Justice & Compassion Ministries, Cal-Pac Conference of the United  
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Pastor Emeritus Jerrold Foltz, Wellspring United Church of Christ  
Liberty Ford, Vestry Member, Episcopal Church of Transfiguration  
Reverend Leandro Fossa, Missionaries of St. Charles  
Missionary Erin Frey  
Rev. Carl Gladstone, Metropolitan United Methodist Church  
Sister Rosemarie Goins, Director of St. Augustine Spirituality Ctr, Laredo, TX, Felician Franciscan Sisters  
of North America  
The Reverend Justo Gonzalez II, Pilgrim-St. Luke's & El Nuevo Camino UCC  
Rabbi Maralee Gordon, McHenry County Jewish Congregation  
Rev. Mark Granfors-Hunt, Wellspring United Church of Christ  
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Rev. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Sister Marietta Hanus  
Rabbi Maurice Harris, Jewish Reconstructionist Communities  
Rev. Stacey Harwell-Dye, United Methodist  
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Rev. Malcolm Himschoot, United Church of Christ  
Dr. Mark Holland, Sanctuary Discernment Committee Member, Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit  
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Rev. Joyce Hollyday, Circle of Mercy Church  
Rev. Ty Hullinger, St. Anthony of Padua Church  
Spiritual Director Carol Ingells  
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George Kanuck, Social Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Lowcountry  
Sister M Jean Keeley, Dominican Sisters of Adrian, MI  
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PCUSA, Guadalupe Presbyterian Church

Senior Pastor Dayna Kinkade, First Christian Church of Orange  
Elder Debbie Konkol, Christ Presbyterian Church  
Deacon Roberta Kuhn, First Congregational  
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Pastor Mary Lee-Clark, Second Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Rev. Dn. Diane Livingston, Episcopal Church  
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Reverend John Long, First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo  
Pastor Beth Lyon, Glenside United Church of Christ  
Pastor Eve MacMaster, Emmanuel Mennonite Church  
Reverend Chuck Maney, Open Table UCC  
Jeanette Mann, Member, Rapid Response Team, All Saints Church  
Rabbi Bonnie Margulis  
Pastor Lilton Marks, Fellowship United Church of Christ  
Community Pastor Jimy Martinez, Neighborhood Ministries  
Sister Nancy McCarthy, BVM  
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Rev Dr Raymond Moreland, United Methodist Church  
Pastor Donald Morgan, First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Elder Pamela Morris, Christian Education Coordinator and Church, Friedens UCC  
Sister Maryann Mueller, Felician Sisters  
Senior Minister Michael Mulberry, Billings First Congregational Church  
Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, Justice and Peace Coordinator, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters  
Pastor Katya Ouchakof, Lake Edge Lutheran Church  
Good Neighbor Specialist Sandra Ovalle  
Associate Pastor Ameer Paparella, First United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids  
Contemplative Activist/Organizer Steve Pavey, Fig Tree Collective - The Gathering  
Rev. Rich Peacock, Waterford Central United Methodist Church  
Reverend Paul Perez, Detroit Conference of The United Methodist Church  
Rev. Kristen Provost Switzer, Newtown Congregational Church, UCC  
Jeffrey Rhodes, CoModerator, Wellspring United Church of Christ in Centreville, VA  
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Celia Saunders, Women of Reform Judaism National Board Member  
Senior Minister Donna Schaper, Judson Memorial Church  
Pastor Sally Scheib, Bethel United Church of Christ  
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Missions Chair Debra Shrader, Rolling Hills United Methodist Church  
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Rev Maren Tirabassi, Second Christian Church, UCC  
Mr. Larry Trent, United Church of Christ  
The Rev. Nick Utphall, Advent Lutheran/Madison Christian Community

Jane Uzzell, Lay Leader, First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Rev. Amy Wharton, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Rev. Greg Wright, Plymouth Congregational UCC  
Chaplain Rev. Christina Wright  
Rev. Michael Yoshii, Buena Vista United Methodist Church  
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, MacArthur Park Lutheran Church