



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

## **Talking Points, Immigration Reform**

### **As a Person of Faith, I Care About Immigration Reform**

We are all God's children, and I care about the wellbeing of my immigrant brothers and sisters. I cannot fulfill my biblical duty to love my neighbor and welcome the stranger while U.S. immigration laws offer no hope for undocumented immigrants, separated families, or exploited workers. Millions of people of faith across the U.S. welcome and service immigrants and have hosted hundreds of prayer vigils, sent hundreds of thousands of postcards to Congress, and are presenting a faithful witness on the need for immigration reform by meeting with you and other members of Congress.

### **The Broken Immigration System has Human Consequences**

Family Separation: Legal immigrants can only apply to be reunited with their spouse and unmarried children, waiting four to seven years. U.S. Citizens can only apply to be reunited with their spouse, children, siblings, and parents, and can wait up to 22 years to be reunited. These backlogs force parents to choose between feeding their children and being with them. Immigration reform must prioritize family unity and reduce waiting times for separated families.

Worker Exploitation: As long as unscrupulous employers can exploit undocumented workers, they will continue to drive down wages and breed divisions in workplaces and in our communities. Immigration reform must provide a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants and protect immigrant workers to strengthen wage and work conditions for all.

Wasted Resources, Increased Deaths: Border fences, immigration detention facilities, raids, and deportation-only strategies have cost taxpayers billions, led to the deaths of thousands of migrants, and diverted resources away from efforts to build safer communities, while doing little to stop undocumented immigration. Immigration reform must include enforceable detention standards and the expansion of cost-effective and humane alternatives to detention programs; and must instead focus on security concerns and dangerous activities, such as drug smuggling and human trafficking.

### **Immigration Reform is Good for Our Country**

Reducing Undocumented Immigration: The only way to reduce undocumented immigration is to fix our immigration system so that people seeking work and family reunification can enter legally. For undocumented immigrants who are already here, we must provide a pragmatic, organized way for them to rectify their status with the law by passing background checks, learning English, and getting on the tax rolls while working toward citizenship. This is not amnesty; it is the only smart, practical way to deal with the approximately 10.8 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Strengthening the Economy: As former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan testified before Congress, immigrants positively affect the economy. A recent report by the Center for American Progress shows that providing a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants and reforming the visa system would increase the Gross Domestic Product by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years, including increases in tax revenue, investment, wage growth, and job creation.

### **Our Country Needs Immigration Reform Now More Than Ever**

By a 3:1 margin, voters nationwide want to turn undocumented immigrants into taxpaying citizens. It's time to stop playing politics with peoples' lives and solve a problem we should have fixed a long time ago. We have a chance, right before us, to transform a dysfunctional, unjust, anti-family system into something that is the best of who we are, while helping our economy. Separated families, exploited workers, and our broken communities cannot wait any longer for Congress to fix our broken immigration system. We urge all members of Congress to enact immigration reform this year.

*Adapted from the Ecumenical Advocacy Days Talking Points on Immigration Reform*

For more information on Church World Service's advocacy for immigration reform, please visit [www.cwsimmigrationreform.org](http://www.cwsimmigrationreform.org).  
For information on the Interfaith Immigration Coalition and the Interfaith Platform, please visit [www.interfaithimmigration.org](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org).