

PRESIDENTS' DAY PRAY-IN & CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

FAITH LEADER "STRANGERS NO MORE" SCRIPTURE LINKS & BACKGROUND GUIDE

CALLED BY SCRIPTURE TO TREAT STRANGERS LIKE CITIZENS-- As people of faith, our commitments are motivated by our scriptures and values that call us hundreds of times to provide refuge to the needy. As one example, God's voice in Leviticus 19:33-34 urges that *"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress them....but the stranger ...shall be to you as the citizen among you. You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."* Even as Congress considers legislative reform, President Obama continues to deport 1,100 immigrants each day—more than any President in history. The Administration must stop this trend and treat immigrants with mercy.

ON PRESIDENTS' DAY, WE URGE THE PRESIDENT TO DO WHAT HE IS ABLE TO DO—President Obama has the legal authority to stop the deportations now. We urge him to claim the authority of his office and give moral leadership from his heart to end the suffering of thousands. He can do so through time honored forms of Administrative relief such as deferred action, TPS for vulnerable populations, parole, administrative closure, a stay of deportation, or order of supervision." Our congregations and communities are filled with families who would benefit from this leadership.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO TURN BACK FROM NEARLY 2 MILLION DEPORTATIONS! Over 200 times, the Hebrew scriptures speak of "mishpat" (justice); urging equitable treatment for all, and particular care for vulnerable immigrants, the poor, oppressed, and widows. The 2 million total number of deportations under the Obama administration is coming within weeks. Faith voices call NOW upon the President to turn back from the brink, and instead heed the voice of the prophet Jeremiah to: *"Do what is just and right....Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner."* (Jeremiah 22:3)

COMMITTED TO PROPHETIC JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES SEPARATED IN OUR CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES—Sacred scriptures speak constantly about the importance of families. Indeed, 1 Timothy 5:8 says *"If anyone does not provide for members of their household, that one has denied the faith."* We remind the President that immigrant children are one quarter of the number of kids in the U.S., and 5.5 million children live in mixed legal status families with the threat of being ripped apart from their parents at any time. We call upon the President to protect these vulnerable families by halting deportations now, and allowing unified families to keep providing moral and economic benefits to our society.

INJUSTICE AND UNSAFE DEPORTATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE! Our faith calls us to pay attention to God's warning that *"I will draw near to you for judgment...against those who thrust aside the alien."* (Malachi 3:5) Too often current deportees are being thrust across borders into unsafe conditions and using unsafe practices. We call for the President to give immediate attention to ensure safer deportation practices, by ending all night time deportations, stopping family separations during the deportation process, not allowing deportations to dangerous sites, having a functioning complaint process, returning belongings of deportees, engaging in consultations among NGOs, and creating detection standards in Customs and Border Patrol facilities.

NOT 1 MORE NOW!--The President's own office has promised to focus on deportations of convicted criminals and those who are threats to national security and public safety. Yet, the excessive number of deportations means many are being deported who have no record of being a safety threat at all. We know this because we have seen many of our church members unjustly detained and deported, such as (share story/ies from your community, or from the IIC's gathered stories for our Oct. 2013 WH visit.) Presidents' Day is the time for the President to use his authority to halt deportations until our legislature gives opportunities for immigrants to get right with the law. Choosing *"to do justice"* (Micah 6:8) is what our God requires!

Speakers—please add in your own family stories to illustrate the above points, or contact sstanley@dhm.disciples.org for a copy of IIC gathered stories.