



Disciples Home Missions Responds to the President's "Immigration Accountability Executive Action"

As a faith movement deeply committed to fulfilling our biblical call to welcome the stranger and live out God's challenge that "the alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you" (Leviticus 19:34), the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) commends the President's important step to grant relief to nearly 5 million immigrants who have lived in the United States for a significant period of time, invested in their local communities, and grown their families among us. By doing so, the President joined every U.S. President since 1956 in using his authority to offer temporary relief to vulnerable immigrants.

Born from a movement on the American frontier, and founded on the principles that all are welcome at the Table of Christ, Disciples throughout our history have had specific ministries of hospitality to immigrants coming to the United States and Canada, which have been carried out by congregations, regions, and general ministries. Family unity remains a core faith value, and we have seen for far too long how separations through detention and deportations cause wrenching pain, and diminish the ability for families to focus upon education, progress, and contributions to our society. With the President's announcement, we recognize how up to 5 million lives from suffering families will now find new hope.

Within our own Disciples family of congregations and communities, we celebrate how the President's executive actions will allow a young woman who was previously excluded from DACA because she'd arrived in 2008 to now be eligible to apply for the expanded program. The "Deferred Action for Parents" program will now allow a mother to find relief who has served behind the scenes in one of our churches for over 20 years, has single-handedly put her older daughter through college, and has a younger daughter in the Navy. We are thankful for protections given to undocumented parents of U.S. citizen children who have lived and paid taxes in the U.S. for so many years. And we are grateful for ways some of our immigrant church leaders are now able to obtain the stability they have sought throughout long seasons of service to God and their neighbors. We appreciate how individuals such as these are contributors, not threats, to our communities.

While we celebrate much in the President's announcement, we likewise grieve for those nearly 6 million immigrants left outside of relief. We have special concern for individuals who do not have U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident children—including many parents of current DACA recipients, and others who entered the U.S. to be unified with their families here. Our historic partnerships with farm workers leave us seeking additional help for the remaining hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers who grow the food on our tables but are not covered by the President's announcement. Our commitment to peace within our border communities leaves us concerned that the emphasis on border enforcement could lead to unnecessary militarization.

We recognize that the President's action is only temporary, and will not lead to permanent status or citizenship. In line with our General Assemblies which have repeatedly called upon Disciples to

reflect from a faith perspective and with intentionality on current immigration issues and to advocate immigration reform legislation that is just, humane and compassionate, we will continue to urge Congress to do what only they can do—enact legislative reform needed to provide permanent solutions that improve our nation’s immigration system.

Our Disciples Office of Refugee & Immigration Ministries will continue to provide updated background and advocacy information, stories of Disciples anticipated to be impacted, and related worship resources on their website at: www.discipleshomeemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/rim-resources/administrative-action-information-responses/. Contact Director Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea for additional assistance as further clarifications unfold, and to share your local stories of persons anticipated to be impacted or left out of the President’s action. Our Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, Tana Liu-Beers offers legal and other related information at www.disciplesimmigration.org/executive-action/. She reminds Disciples who may qualify for the new deferred action program to beware of notarios and scam artists who try to take advantage of immigrants during this time. As the program has not yet begun, applications are not yet being accepted. Individuals who hope to qualify can prepare by collecting documents to prove their continuous presence in the U.S. since January 1, 2010. Individuals should also continue paying their taxes, and should save money for application fees.