

Religious leaders call Fifth Circuit ruling on immigration unjust, call on Supreme Court to take it up

In response to the Fifth Circuit Court's decision on DAPA and expanded DACA, faith leaders call for Supreme Court to reverse decision

WASHINGTON - Following the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in *Texas v. U.S.*, religious leaders and faith-based organizations across the country are asking the Supreme Court to support the Obama administration's appeal and reverse the ruling. Last November, President Obama announced executive actions to create the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) program and expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in an effort to provide relief from deportation for more than five million undocumented individuals. Now nearly one year later, the Fifth Circuit Court has upheld an injunction against the actions, leaving millions of individuals separated from their families and living in fear of deportation.

Earlier this year, 19 faith-based organizations filed an Amicus brief with the Fifth Circuit Court to advocate alongside individuals seeking relief from deportation. Thousands of congregations had already begun preparations to help community members apply for DAPA and expanded DACA. Despite the repeated calls of religious leaders and immigrant communities across the United States, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against compassion and upheld the injunction on these programs.

In response to the news of the continued injunction, leaders from national organizations representing faith communities across the country reiterated their commitment to accompany undocumented families and individuals anxiously awaiting relief through DAPA and expanded DACA.

Statements from faith leaders associated with the Amicus brief are below:

"We continue to hope that we can be a country with a big enough heart to welcome those who are living and working among us. Whose children only know this country as home and are a big part of our future."

Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

"After the Fifth Circuit's decision concerning DACA and DAPA what remains abundantly clear is that the United States Congress needs to urgently address immigration reform. Hispanic Evangelicals are looking for genuine leadership on this issue. No more delays and excuses. Politicians who ignore, punt, or seek to go backwards on immigration reform will be held accountable at the ballot box."

Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President of National Latino Evangelical Coalition

"The DACA and DAPA programs are a means by which President plans to exercise his constitutional discretion to prioritize immigration enforcement resources, while offering a process by which some of our 11 million undocumented communities members may apply for a temporary reprieve from deportation. We trust that upon appeal the Supreme Court will recognize the 5th Circuit's error in this case. Most importantly, the United States has a legal

interest and a moral duty to preserve the unity of families. The executive actions on immigration will be particularly important for the millions of children who are U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents who will be able to breathe easier once DAPA is implemented, free from the constant specter of their parents' deportation. It is these children, as well as DREAMers, brought to the US as children, whose interests should be paramount in the minds of decision makers as this case moves forward."

Father Bill Kelley, SJ Secretary for Social and International Ministries at the Jesuit Conference

"Nearly one year ago, we celebrated President Obama's executive actions to help many of our undocumented brothers and sisters. But due to the Fifth Circuit Court's decision to uphold the injunction, millions of our brothers and sisters will continue to live in fear of deportation. Instead of acting out of political motivation, the court should have acted on the legal precedent of our land. As people of faith, we continue to stand in solidarity with those who have been unjustly deported and those who live in fear because of this decision. We support Obama administration's decision to appeal the ruling to the highest level and ask the Supreme Court to consider the case with compassion and allow DAPA and expanded DACA to move forward."

Rev. John L. McCullough, President and CEO of Church World Service

"The Jewish community is particularly aware that effective immigration policies have often made the difference between life and death, between oppression and the opportunity for success. This ruling is an unfortunate roadblock to keeping families together."

Melanie Nezer, Vice President for Policy & Advocacy at HIAS

"NETWORK is disappointed by the Fifth Circuit's decision to deny family unity to millions of Americans. Our nation is a country of immigrants, and it is time for political leaders to recognize that reality. While we urge the Supreme Court to make this issue a priority, we know that executive and judicial action is only a temporary fix. We need Speaker Ryan to bring immigration reform up for a vote."

Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director of NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

"During each month that the President's Immigration Accountability Executive Action has remained blocked in the courts, we have learned of more members within our Disciples family of faith who live in the pain of separation and fear of division from their loved ones. We recognize the President's action would only bring temporary relief, and we continue to advocate for Congressional action on deeply needed immigration reform legislation that is just, humane and compassionate. Yet in the absence of such legislative solutions, we celebrated the President's announced protections last year, and partnered months ago to communicate their pain through a faith leaders' Amicus Brief to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Now today, while we are disappointed in the Fifth Circuit's ruling against Executive Action, we celebrate the Administration's intent to appeal for the Supreme Court to allow for its implementation. Such implementation will offer relief to families who have suffered greatly for years, but have--despite their pain--contributed with faithfulness and courage to our churches and communities. Enactment of the President's stated programs of relief would offer stability to families as they continue in service to God and neighbor. The implementation of Executive

Action would help us live visibly God's challenge that "the sojourner who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you" (Leviticus 19:34)."

Rev. Dr. Ronald J. Degges, President of Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada

"The decision of the Fifth Circuit is fundamentally incompatible with the borderless love of Jesus. Resist!"

Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood, Executive Director of Hope for Peace & Justice

"The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is deeply disappointed by the decision of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals panel to overturn the Obama Administration's policy allowing up to five million immigrants to remain in the US without fear of deportation. We firmly support the president's action, which sought to prevent hardworking immigrants — some of whom have been in this country for decades — from being needlessly torn from their homes, jobs, communities, and families. We urge the Justice Department to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court. NCJW's work for a fair immigration policy began more than 100 years ago and will not end until the millions of immigrant workers, parents, and DREAMers in our country have the opportunity they deserve to live, work, and stay in the US with their families."

Nancy K. Kaufman, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women

"Two judges have decided to put politics over people, and now millions of families are at risk of being senselessly torn apart by deportation. This decision is not justice. It is not what welcoming the stranger and caring for the least of these looks like. Christians must continue to fight alongside our immigrant brothers and sisters, many of whom are members of our churches, so that everyone can enjoy the flourishing that God intends for us all. We must continue to condemn the hateful rhetoric around immigration, we must continue the fight to fix our broken system by enacting comprehensive immigration reform, and we must continue to rally all people of faith to the cause. And we will continue to put politicians on notice: any attempt to deport millions of people will be met by massive civil disobedience by Christians and our allies."

Rev. Jim Wallis, Founder and President of Sojourners

###



Megan Cagle, Media Associate
Immigration and Refugee Program
Church World Service
110 Maryland Ave, NE, Suite 110
Washington, DC 20002

Phone: 202.733.5151

Cell: 602.399.0723

Skype: mcaglecws

mcagle@cwsglobal.org

cwsglobal.org/immigration

