

10 Things to Know About Tonight's Immigration Announcement by President Obama

Tonight, the President is going to announce his action to provide relief for millions of immigrant families (tune in at 8 pm ET). It's big news, but it isn't a surprise — it's evidence that the pressure for compassion and immigrant justice is working. But there's a lot left to do. So here's a list we put together of 10 things to know About President Obama's Executive Relief on immigration.

1) Above all, this is about keeping families together. In the last six years, the US government has deported over 2 million of our neighbors. That's over 1,000 deportations per day. Just between 2010-2012, over 200,000 mothers and fathers of U.S. citizens were deported. That's close to 3 full Super Bowl stadiums. The time is now to stop separating families.

2) Grassroots FTW (for the win). This moment has been in the making for a long time, and it's the result of pressure from immigrants and immigration activists around the country. Their call for change and compassion is prophetic, and it's rooted in first-hand experience of pain and suffering.

3) Jesus didn't say "Deport thy neighbor." As people of faith, we have skin in the game. Our sacred texts mandate us to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger. It's why congregations around the country have welcomed undocumented neighbors facing deportation into Sanctuary — because we have a moral obligation to stand in the gap when families are facing separation.¹



[Angela just entered Sanctuary in Philadelphia after facing deportation for 10 years.](#)

4) Waiting for Congress to act didn't work. The President's strategy to increase enforcement and deportations to get votes for immigration reform legislation failed. The House of Representatives had over a year to act on the bipartisan Senate bill, but did nothing. We waited and now the President must take action; our communities, families and congregations are on the line.

5) Executive Action on Immigration is within full legal authority of the President. President Obama has the legal authority — and the moral obligation — to stop separating families by applying the law of prosecutorial discretion (not pursuing deportations of immigrants with family and community ties). Plus, it's been used by Nixon, Reagan, Bush (Sr), Clinton, and Bush (Jr).²

6) Administrative Action is expected to provide relief for 5 million people — including an opportunity to apply for temporary relief from deportation, and the ability to work and travel legally.³ But there are 11 million undocumented human beings whose families are at risk (that's approx. the populations of NYC and LA *combined*). **Who is going to be left out?** Parents of U.S. citizen children will likely be included, but what if an individual has an immigration-related criminal offense such as "illegal re-entry," or if they have a DUI, but are part of a diversion program? As people of faith, we know that each person matters and is sacred. The administration must take into account full



[Francisco is a father and labor rights leader in Sanctuary in Portland who was charged with "illegal re-entry."](#)

human stories, lead with forgiveness and redemption, and allow all undocumented immigrants who contribute to their communities to apply for temporary relief.

7) More border enforcement isn't the answer. The administration is planning to re-direct funds for border enforcement, but the Border Patrol has massive problems with corruption, excessive use of force and lack of accountability. Militarizing our borders and criminalizing our community members shouldn't be trade-offs for relief for families.⁴

8) Now is the time to speak up. As people of faith and moral courage, our voices are needed to help our communities and congregations understand the big news – “Yes! The President's action is helping keep families together, and there's more to be done.” Turn up your prophetic volume in your sermons, social media, email, press conferences, op-eds, and direct actions.

9) There's going to be push back. Congressional Republicans are already promising to fight back. Call your representatives at 1-866-940-2439 to let them know people of faith support the President's plan to grant temporary relief from deportation. We must prevent Congress from trying to pass legislation that would defund or block this executive action.

10) Prepare now for implementation. Although the policy of administrative relief will be announced this week, it is not likely to go into effect for another few months. From hosting education forums to legal clinics, fundraising for application fees to community outreach, we can help eligible families get the protection they need to stay together. The pressure is working. Let's keep it up.

At Groundswell, we'll continue to equip people of faith and moral courage to take action to heal and repair the world. If you have any questions about anything you read here, feel free to reply to this email and we'll do our best to resource you. You can check out some of our current immigration work [here](#).



<http://www.groundswell-mvmt.org/10-things-to-know-about-tonights-immigration-announcement-by-president-obama/>

[1] [Click here to read Sanctuary 101: How churches and synagogues are stopping deportations.](#)

[2] [Here's a letter signed by 136 leading experts on immigration law showing the President's legal authority to take action.](#)

[3] [Here's a report on the Executive Relief](#)

[4] [Here's info on the negative impacts of Border Patrol growing too rapidly.](#)