

USA Migrant Resolution 2011

As concerned people of faith and in recognition of the migrants and refugees with whom we live and serve around the world, we endorse the following resolution:

Whereas, the United States of America has historically been a nation built through the labor and contribution of immigrants; from the first pilgrims to the current wave of Latin American migrants, this has been a nation of opportunity and safe refuge for those escaping political turmoil, natural disasters and economic hardship in their country of origin; these migrants and refugees, once they have entered into the borders of this country, have been systematically discriminated against, with their basic rights consistently ignored or exploited; and

Whereas Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, chairman of US Bishop Conference's committee on Migration, stated in his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, "Individuals and groups must be secure from arrest, torture, and imprisonment for political and ideological reasons, and all in society, including migrant workers, must be guaranteed juridical protection of their personal, social, cultural and political rights. We condemn the abridgement of rights because of race"; and

Whereas, as people of faith, we are all called to serve God through our actions towards those who are poor and marginalized; many of us have lived with, worked alongside, and served migrant communities in the United States; we have dedicated our lives to advocating for the dignity and rights of the weary and exploited migrants that have crossed our paths; and

Whereas, migrants include those escaping from political turmoil, natural disasters and economic hardships in their country of origin; immigrants from across the world have served their host communities through the major contributions of their labor; nowhere is this clearer than in the low-wage industries, where wealth is created by garment, restaurant, day labor, domestic, home care workers and other immigrant workers who receive poverty wages and endure exploitation; and

Whereas, immigrant workers have endured deplorable working conditions such as long work hours without overtime pay, no access to workers compensation, little regard for their health and safety, harassment, discrimination, and blacklisting, and have little or no protection by government agencies in charge of enforcing labor laws; and

Whereas, immigrant workers lack job security, and a living wage and are trapped in these low-wage industries without the hope of improving their lives and that of their families; and

Whereas, immigrant workers face higher levels of exploitation because most lack legal documentation, and they have been subject to threats and harassment to be expelled from their host countries, incarcerated and deported thereby creating a fearful working and living environment; and

Whereas, immigrant workers have been pushed into the shadows of society, into a semi-permanent state of insecurity and vulnerability; more specifically, due to mass deportations, the criminalization of migrants, and the militarization of the Southwest border; and

Whereas the current hostile environment towards immigrants in the United States includes: anti-immigration legislation in several states, counties and localities; pending legislation in many other jurisdictions; xenophobia, racism, and barely concealed hatred; and

Whereas, immigrant workers and their families, because of their immigration status, are also systematically denied access to a driver's license, decent healthcare, social services, and quality education;

Let it be resolved:

That we, as people of faith living and working with immigrants, hereby endorse the following principles as guidelines for a better world for immigrants in the United States. We urge all others to uphold these principles as we work together to improve the conditions for low-wage immigrant workers and their families.

JUSTICE - All immigrant workers deserve and must receive the following support to lead healthy, decent and productive lives:

- True legalization should be given in the form of permanent legal status and citizenship. This should not be limited to any country of origin or work industry.
- Greater protection and enforcement of international labor laws, which will guarantee at least minimum wage and security from blacklisting, harassment and intimidation of any kind.

DIGNITY – All immigrant workers and their families deserve:

Clean, safe and proper working conditions to prevent illness, stress and workplace accidents.

- Access to decent and quality healthcare, and nutrition.
- Permanent, stable and secure work.
- Access to quality education.
- Access to safe affordable housing.

DEMOCRACY – All immigrant workers and their families must hold the same freedoms and rights as any member of their host country. Immigrant families must be able to voice their concerns.

Endorsed by:

African American Ministers Leadership Council
American Friends Service Committee
Annunciation House, Inc.
Arkansas Justice for Our Neighbors
Board of Church and Society (NY Conference, United Methodist)
Casa Esperanza
Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice -LA
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Dominican Sisters of Houston
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Gloria Dei Step Up Center
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center – Cincinnati
Interfaith Worker Justice
Irish Apostolate USA
Justice and Peace/ Dominicans in North America
Kitchen Table Ministries
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Council, Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ
Leadership Team, Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, IA
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Medical Mission Sisters, Alliance for Justice
Mexican American Catholic College
Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office
Missionary Society of St. Columban (USA)
Muslim Public Affairs Council
Network, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Office of Immigration and Refugee Services, American Baptist Home Mission Societies
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, Stony Point, NY

Promoter of Peace and Justice, Sinsinawa Dominicans
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Archdiocese of Chicago
Sister of Mercy, NyPPaW
Sisters of Humility Nonviolence Action Planning Group
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, South Central Community
Sisters of Notre Dame:Base Communities
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
Sojourners
The African American Ministers in Action
UCC Justice and Witness Ministries
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
WPA Conference United Methodist Women
Welcoming Immigrants Network