

INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) is a partnership of faith-based organizations committed to enacting fair and humane immigration reform that reflects our mandate to welcome the stranger and treat all human beings with dignity and respect. Coalition members work together to advocate for just and equitable immigration policies, educate faith communities, and serve immigrant populations around the country. Through this coalition, hundreds of national and local faith-based organizations and faith leaders have called on Congress and the Administration to enact immigration reform consistent with these values. Disclaimer: Not all activities and materials on the website reflect the opinion of all Steering Committee members.

For more, visit www.InterfaithImmigration.org

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IN ADVANCE OF SCOTUS HEARING, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS KICK OFF 48 HOUR VIGIL TO STOP ARIZONA'S HARSH ANTI-IMMIGRANT LAWS

More Than 100 Clergy Protest at Supreme Court, Call for People of Faith to "Love Thy Neighbor," "Welcome the Stranger"

Washington DC—Today, local DC clergy and national religious leaders gathered on the steps of the Supreme Court to call for a just ruling against Arizona's anti-immigrant SB 1070 law, which will be heard by the Court on Wednesday, April 25. More than 100 clergy and lay leaders of different denominations and traditions, including Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Evangelical, and Unitarian Universalist, kicked off a 48 hour vigil, which is intended to lift up the moral responsibility of all people of faith to "welcome the stranger" and "love thy neighbor."

As Rabbi Noam Marans, Director of Interreligious and Intergroup Relations for the American Jewish Committee, commented, "The diverse religious leadership of America joins together as the conscience of this great nation, to urge our judges to strike down Arizona's SB 1070 and fulfill the American promise of opportunity and fairness for our immigrant community, reflected in the Biblical proposition that we are all created in God's image."

Rev. John T. Crestwell, Jr., Associate Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, noted, "As Unitarian Universalists we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all. This worth includes our Latino and Latina brothers and sisters who are being undeniably discriminated against with SB 1070. My prayer is that this bigoted law be overturned. I stand on the side of love and justice not on the side of hatred and fear."

Faith-based advocacy groups believe that the court's ruling in *United States v. Arizona*, which is expected in June, will determine whether the U.S. will have one immigration policy or fifty. Faith leaders from diverse communities around the country have expressed concern that if the court rules to uphold SB1070, the court will also be upholding Arizona's initiative to enact laws that lead to racial profiling and judging people on how they look regardless of citizenship. Arizona styled anti-immigrant laws have proven harsh and unjust as they tear apart families, jeopardize community safety, destroy state economies and leave crops rotting in the fields as witnessed in Alabama and Georgia.

"As Sisters of Mercy, we are committed to stand in solidarity with immigrants seeking the fullness of life. We believe the Arizona immigration law will result in racial profiling and unwarranted arrest and deportation. This will cause tremendous suffering, particularly on families who will be separated, said Sr. Pat McDermott, RSM, President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. "Contrary to our faith teachings, the Arizona law perpetuates a system of welcoming some and not others. For 171 years, the Sisters of Mercy have served immigrant communities, and we will continue advocating on their behalf."

Added Father Peter Lyons, TOR, of the Franciscan Action Network, "On top of all the other expressions of injustice in the Arizona law, it threatens the religious liberty of people of faith. Since we are called to minister to our sisters and brothers in need, 'we must obey God rather than man.'"

Lisa Sharon Harper, Director of Mobilizing for Sojourners, stated, "Senate Bill 1070 is nothing less than a social and racial sin. A social sin because the law serves only to divide communities in Arizona, preying on fear and distrust of individuals. Racial, because it encourages discrimination against people based on how they look or how they speak. And trust me, the 'reasonable suspicion' that a person might be undocumented rarely comes from their works or deeds; 'reasonable suspicion' is aroused because of the shallow, hurtful and frankly offensive expectation that someone who has skin of a certain color, or a certain accent, might not be American."

Faith leaders will continue activities in protest of the Arizona law on Wednesday, the day the Court will hear the case. That morning, religious leaders will join civil rights, labor and business leaders for a press conference on the dangerous impact of laws similar to SB1070, before joining people of faith in a biblically-inspired "Jericho March" around the Court, and culminating in a solidarity rally with more than 500 supporters.

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Supreme Court Hearing on AZ's SB1070 & Anti-Immigrant Laws
*Standing together for Immigrant Rights, Voting Rights and Worker Rights, and
United Against SB 1070, Arizona's Discriminatory Racial Profiling Law*

10 AM Faith Leader Press Conference Kick off for 48 Hour Vigil

UPDATED AGENDA

Rev. Crestwell: Welcome, Introduction of all speakers, Setting the Scene

Prayer: Rabbi Marans

Father Lyons: Making the Faith Perspective Clear Welcoming the Stranger and Loving our Neighbor:

Lisa Sharon Harper: Why SB 1070 is problematic? Issues of racial profiling and the harshness of attrition by enforcement

Sister Pat McDermott: Impact on congregations and outreach ministries, economic cost and importance of immigrants

Rev. Crestwell: Thank you, closing, possible Q&A

Suggested Talking Points on SB 1070 from a Faith Perspective

As the Supreme Court hears arguments about the **legality** of Arizona's SB1070, we have come here today to speak to its **morality**. We are diverse people of faith who embrace the moral teachings of our faith traditions and the moral underpinnings of our democracy.

The values of our faith and our nation require us, as individuals and communities, to respect the human rights and dignity of all human beings; to insist on justice and fairness for all; to act with kindness and compassion; to welcome the stranger, and to treat the stranger as we treat those born among us; and to live together as "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

SB 1070 violates these tenets. Its "show me your papers" provision encourages discrimination against people just because of the way they look or speak, even if they've been American citizens all their lives. It would lead to the separation of parents and children, shattering lives and families and causing immense pain and suffering. Aimed at encouraging unauthorized immigrants to "self-deport", it would force those unable or unwilling to do so deeper into the shadows of our communities, perpetuating a two-tiered society so clearly condemned in scripture and our Pledge of Allegiance. So as the Supreme Court takes up questions of legality, we urge our fellow Americans to give precedence to questions of morality. Reject laws like SB 1070, and insist on just, humane and comprehensive reform of our broken immigration system.

Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself

- Our faith compels us to stand against a law that makes it a criminal offense for someone to work and provide for their family, that splits apart families, and criminalizes those who would assist people in need simply because they lack immigration status.
- The Primary goal of SB 1070 and its counterparts is attrition through enforcement, to make the living conditions so harsh that it would drive out all undocumented people. We find these tactics inhumane and contradictory to the scriptural call to welcome the stranger.
- We call on our Courts, who are people of faith, to search their hearts and minds through prayer and to stop this law that not only unfairly targets a very vulnerable segment of our society, but also is contrary to our faith teachings to welcome the stranger in our midst and to love our neighbor regardless of race, country of origin, or immigration status.

Welcome the Stranger

"The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God." -Leviticus 19: 34

- Our faith values call on us to lift up those placed on the margins, the outcast, the down trodden, not target them and marginalize them further.
- Requiring law enforcement officials to check the immigration status of person's lawful stops will lead to practices of racial profiling.

Religious Freedoms

- How do anti-immigrant laws like SB 1070 impact our ministries such as providing transportation, teaching English and civics, and including all in our religious services?
- Hispanic Ministries and outreach efforts among immigrants are at risk as fear and confusion would cause division within our faith communities and make people afraid to even go to church.
- In Alabama many have been fearful to keep their ESL programs, hunger ministries, housing assistance, and Spanish Worship Services out of concern they could be considered harboring underneath these new harsh laws .

'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? "The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' -Matthew 25: 37-40

ECONOMIC COST

- Anti-immigrant bills are costly to the states. The University of Alabama found that their anti-immigrant law's economic costs include implementation, enforcement, and litigation expenditures; increased costs and inconveniences for citizens, other legal residents, and businesses; fewer economic development opportunities; and the economic impact of reduced aggregate demand as some illegal immigrants leave and therefore no longer earn and spend income in the state.
- Fear is not a jobs plan. The state could lose thousands of workers, producers, consumers and taxpayers impacting labor supply for key industries, retail sales, and property values. Farmers worry they won't have enough workers to harvest the crops.
- SB 1070 is an unfunded mandate. In a time of budget cuts and tightening of the belt, our economic recovery is very fragile. SB 1070 has no allotted funding or necessary training for local police and Sheriffs offices – all during a time of severe budget cuts.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Laws like SB 1070 make us less safe. Unsafe communities are created when local law enforcement is overburdened with immigration enforcement. Additionally, all citizens are at risk when community trust is broken and immigrants are afraid to report crimes for fear of deportation and family separation.
- SB 1070 harms the most vulnerable. Victims of domestic abuse situations shouldn't be scared to call the police, no matter their immigration status. Children should not be threatened with abandonment if their parents are arrested or deported.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- SB 1070 encourages racial profiling against people just because of the way they look or speak, even if they have been American citizens all their lives.
- We have already seen reports that show that Sheriff Joe Arpaio has been targeting Latino populations. SB 1070 creates an environment in which anti-immigrant sentiment and racial profiling are deemed acceptable. We stand here to proclaim that hate, fear and division are **not** acceptable.
- The Supreme Court needs to strike down the law to protect basic rights / Constitutional freedoms.

IMMIGRATION IS A FEDERAL ISSUE

- Immigration has always been enforced at the federal level in accord with the U.S. constitution.
- The Immigration system is broken and needs to be dealt with through immigration reform solutions at the federal level, not by having each state with its own immigration law. The U.S. should establish one national law on immigration, not a confusing patchwork of 50 different laws that threaten our Constitutional freedoms.

Additional Messaging Tips

Top Line: The law encourages racial profiling against people just because of the way they look or speak, even if they have been American citizens all their lives. In order to protect our basic (civil) rights, the Supreme Court needs to strike down this law so the U.S. can establish one national law on immigration, not a confusing patchwork of fifty different ones.		
Frame	Solutions	Values
<p>The Supreme Court should not allow our Constitutional rights to be undermined by states that take federal law into their own hands.</p> <p>The Arizona “show me your papers” law, and similar laws enacted in other states, undermines our basic rights. It encourages discrimination against people based on how they look or how they speak. It says anyone who is “suspect” has to be asked for their citizenship papers. It essentially legalizes harassment and discrimination.</p> <p>Is it right for a military veteran to get asked for his papers just because he’s of Mexican heritage?</p> <p>Is it right for a mother of Asian or Latino background who speaks with an accent to get asked for her papers – right in front of her children – when her white friend next to her does not?</p> <p>Is it right that immigrants who work hard and aspire to be citizens live in daily fear of being stopped, arrested and deported away from their loved ones?</p> <p>Is it right to create a culture of suspicion in an America that becomes more diverse every day?</p> <p>No. A state law that encourages discrimination is flat out wrong. That’s not who we are as a country.</p>	<p>As we’ve seen throughout our nation’s history, it is the federal government – rather than the states – that is best suited to protect our basic right to equal treatment under the law.</p> <p>States may have the right ideas on some issues, but on issues such as national security and immigration, the Constitution is clear: the U.S. should speak with one voice and establish one national law, not a confusing patchwork of fifty different laws.</p> <p>Our country desperately needs immigration reform that moves us forward as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. That’s why Congress needs to do its job and pass comprehensive immigration reform. And many states are passing pro-immigrant laws, to protect wages for all workers, enable high school grads to attend college at in-state tuition rates, expand English classes and encourage citizenship. Meanwhile, laws such as Arizona’s are based on the ugly notion that America should expel 11 million hard working undocumented immigrants, most of who have worked and lived in America for more than a decade. This is both impractical and un-American.</p> <p>State “show me your papers” laws are not the solution. When farm workers left Alabama for other states, crops rotted on the vine. When Arizona gained a reputation for discrimination, the state lost an estimated \$145m in convention business. When teachers in Alabama were forced to become immigration agents, students were afraid to attend school. When cops are required to check immigration papers, they spend less time solving serious crimes. When states sanction profiling, U.S. citizens and immigrants alike get stopped and harassed.</p>	<p>America is founded on the idea that all men and women are created equal, no matter what we look like or where we come from. “Show me your papers” laws violate this Constitutional guarantee.</p> <p>Our greatness comes from aspiring to be one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. The Arizona “show me your papers” law dishonors these principles.</p> <p>We may have come on different ships, but we are all in the same boat now. And it’s up to the Supreme Court to ensure that all Americans, no matter their background, are treated equally under the law.</p> <p>The Arizona “show me your papers” law is not what America is about. Families under siege because of the way they look? Americans forced to carry their citizenship papers at all times, or else? Veterans made to feel unwelcome in a country they risked their lives for? Latinos, Asians and others subjected to harassment when they walk down the street, drive in their car, interact with the government or shop at a store? Not in my America.</p> <p>In America people should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin.</p>