

***New York State
Interfaith Network for
Immigration Reform***
(Network Membership in Formation)

*American Jewish Committee, Long Island, New
York City, Westchester Offices*

Cabrini Immigrant Services

Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of New York

*Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn and
Queens*

Council of Churches of the City of New York

Council of Peoples Organizations

Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

*Hindu Temple Society of North America,
Flushing, New York*

Interfaith Alliance of Rochester

Interfaith Center of New York

Judson Memorial Church

Latino Leadership Circle

Latino Pastoral Action Center

Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood

Muslim Consultative Network

New York Faith & Justice

New York State Council of Churches

New York New Sanctuary Coalition

New York Theological Seminary

Presbytery of New York City

Reformed Church in America

Riverside Church

Rockland Jews for Justice

Rural & Migrant Ministry

The Sikh Coalition

UJA Federation of New York

United Methodist Church, NY Conference

Union Theological Seminary, NYC

**In partnership with*

The New York Immigration Coalition

&

The Hudson Valley Community Coalition

**New York State Faith Leaders Support
Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

September 29, 2009

The New York State Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform is a network of leaders and organizations representing diverse New York State faith communities that have come together in order to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. The Network works in collaboration with the national Interfaith Immigration Coalition, and has embraced the Coalition's principles.

The impetus for our effort lies in religious teachings and precepts that require us to "welcome the stranger" (Leviticus 19:33, Matthew 25:35); to "do good to...neighbors who are strangers....the wayfarer that you meet" (the Qur'an); to "treat the guest as a representative of God." (Taitiriya Upanishad 1.11.2) Our nation's broken immigration system leads to a violation of these precepts. It keeps 12 million undocumented immigrants in the shadows, and provides pretext for bigots who foment acts of hate and violence against individuals perceived to be immigrants. The enforcement of immigration laws through raids, detentions and deportations sows fear and pain within families and communities, and too often violates fundamental American principles of due process and humane treatment of all persons. Our immigration system rends the fabric of American society, and undercuts the human values that are America's greatness. For this reason, we join together in calling on Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform that is consistent with basic standards of morality.

More specifically, we ask that comprehensive immigration reform legislation:

1. Uphold family unity as a priority.

It is critical to the welfare of American society and its communities that:

- immigrant families separated because of lengthy visa backlogs be reunited in a more timely manner;
- that family preference categories and per-country caps be revised so families can be united;
- that bars for re-entry be removed and status for individuals seeing to reunite with family members be adjusted.

We are extremely concerned about proposals to deny birthright citizenship to the children of immigrants, and to place family-based and employment-based visa applicants in competition with each other on a points based system. Such proposals are inimical to the goal of promoting family unity, and must be rejected.

2. Create a process that will enable undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and eventual citizenship.

A comprehensive immigration reform law must make it possible for undocumented immigrants to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria and, over time, pursue an option to become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens.

Enabling undocumented immigrants to earn legal status is not only important on moral grounds, but will also enhance national security. It is not in America's interest to have 12 million immigrants living in the shadows, outside the mainstream of community life and institutions.

3. Restore due process protections and reform detention policies.

Immigration enforcement policies and practices, including raids, detentions, and deportations too often deny due process and violate fundamental American values of compassion and justice. Comprehensive immigration reform must ensure that these values guide enforcement policies.

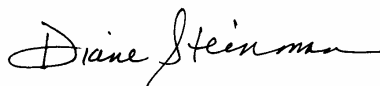
4. Expand legal avenues for workers seeking to migrate to the U.S. in a safe, legal and orderly way, and fully protect their rights and the rights of all workers.

As New York faith-based leaders and organizations, we are obligated by the values of our faith to highlight the moral implications of our nation's public policies, and to call for change when cherished values are violated. We appreciate the contribution that immigrants make to our congregations, religious institutions and the wider community. Immigrants have made extraordinary contributions to the vitality and prosperity of our City, State and nation. We call on Congress to reset our nation's moral compass and enact comprehensive immigration reform as soon as possible.

Submitted on behalf of the Steering Committee by Co-Chairs:



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Associate Executive Presbyter for Social Witness
Presbytery of New York City



Dr. Diane Steinman
Executive Director, American Jewish Committee
New York City Office

The Steering Committee also includes:

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Muslim Consultative Network

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Executive Director
New York Faith & Justice

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Immigration Advocacy Field Coordinator
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