



IFTJ 2017 IMMIGRATION TALKING POINTS

Purpose of the Visit:

Ask Congress to support the Dream Act of 2017 and to decrease funding for detention and deportation.

Our Faith Teaches We Must Welcome those Who Migrate

Pope Francis reminded Congress, "In recent centuries, millions of people came to this land to pursue their dream of building a future in freedom. We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners...We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal."

As members of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, we stand with the Pope, the U.S. Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Jesuit Provincials in asking for immigration policy that supports family unity, provides a pathway to citizenship, and promotes humane and just treatment of immigrants. We also call on Congress to rethink policy that unnecessarily militarizes the border and increases the vulnerability of individuals fleeing their countries in search of protection.

Personal Testimony (if applicable) Personalize the issue by sharing your story or the story of someone you know who is directly affected by our nation's broken immigration system.

Legislative action for compassionate immigration policy should:

Provide undocumented young people with access to a path to citizenship in recognition that they are woven into the fabric of our country and by every social and human measure, American youth.

- We support a path to citizenship for those with DACA and Temporary Protected Status, as well as other undocumented young people;

Create safe and humane communities by reducing the detrimental effects of detention and deportation on families.

- We oppose an increase in enforcement spending in the interior and on the border and believe that the U.S. has a responsibility to ensure that immigration law enforcement is professional, accountable, and humane.
- We must allow local law enforcement officials to focus on criminal laws, leaving civil codes to immigration officials. We also need more robust and transparent oversight of agencies responsible for immigration enforcement: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- The United States must change its detention and deportation practices to preserve immigrants' dignity and safety. These changes should keep families together during the deportation process, inform individuals in their own language of their rights and how to complain about mistreatment, and allow Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to access CBP facilities.

- Screening of CBP agents has greatly improved. But reform proposals are needed to address the lack of sufficient screening of previously hired agents, as well as the improper training, oversight, and accountability of agents.
- We support humane and cost-effective alternatives to detention, like community-based case management systems, which are critical to avoid re-traumatizing individuals fleeing violence by allowing immigrants and refugees to live in supportive and safe environments while service providers guide them through the immigration process.

Based on our values we are committed to a long-term vision of humane and comprehensive reform of a broken system.

- Our faith teaches us that people have a right to migrate; this is not amnesty.
- People also have the right to remain in their homes and home country. The U.S. should examine the root causes of migration and address these factors with long-term solutions.
- For the approximately 11 million undocumented Americans currently living in the U.S., we must provide a realistic way for them to work toward citizenship while passing background checks, learning English, and paying taxes if they aren't already. It is the only smart, practical, faithful way to respond to our broken immigration system.
- The U.S. must also address the shortage of family-based visas and unreasonable wait times for people living in other countries wishing to join their families in the U.S.

ASK: Will the Congressperson be vocal in support of a path to citizenship for Dreamers and in opposition to increased funding for detention and deportation that separates families and communities?

- Support the Dream Act of 2017, which provides DACA recipients and other undocumented young people a path to citizenship;
- Rather than investing in detention, deportation, and border security, place resources and cost savings into community-based alternatives to detention and other programs and services that build stronger communities and economies;

ASK: Will the Congressperson publicly support the following principles of compassionate immigration policy?

- Create an accessible pathway to citizenship for all 11 million people without documentation;
- Work to maintain family unity in all elements of the immigration system;
- Protect the most vulnerable, especially refugees and asylum seekers;
- Respect the rights of U.S. and immigrant workers;
- Ensure the human rights of immigrant families;
- Examine the root causes of migration and propose long-term solutions.