



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

October 24, 2013

Dear Representatives:

It has been almost a year of near constant media coverage and speculation about the inevitability of immigration reform. In this year, more than 400,000 people have been deported, many of whom are parents of U.S. citizen children and the backlogs in our family and employment based immigration have continued to grow. This has created an untenable situation in communities and congregations as they struggle to live in the tension of hope and fear. A majority of Americans see this dysfunction in our laws and support reform that includes a pathway to citizenship. I urge you to stand with this majority and lead our country to compassionate comprehensive immigration reform.

As a pastoral leader, I am acutely aware of the suffering created by our broken immigration laws. I often visit with Presbyterians across the country and have the privilege of hearing their stories and walking alongside them. Many struggle with uncertainty in their immigration status and many stand in solidarity with immigrants by advocating for change in the laws and providing services to those most impacted by the consequences of an unjust system.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has set forth specific foundational requirements of a just immigration policy, which include:

- A pathway to citizenship for those living and working in the U.S.
- Eliminate or reduce the backlogs in employment and family immigration.
- Create new pathways for those who wish to come to the U.S. to do so legally.
- Reform detention standards, to make them enforceable and create alternatives to detention.
- Create a border maintenance policy that respects human rights and due process.
- Eliminate internal enforcement programs that create points of contact and cooperation between local law enforcement and federal immigration agencies.

Now is the time for reform. Not a redoubling of enforcement measures or a border surge that militarizes border communities, but a just and comprehensive reform that honors our past as a nation of immigrants and ensures that we will continue to be a country held up as the measure of freedom and opportunity. I urge you to remember your immigration story and to work across party lines to solve this challenge facing our country. Thank you for your time and blessings in your service to our country.

Regards,

The Reverend Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)