



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROGRAM**

**The Campaign for Immigration Reform:
Churches and Communities Standing With Immigrants**

What is immigration reform?

Immigration reform would reunite families separated due to visa backlogs as long as 22 years, protect the rights of all workers, reform inhumane detention and deportation processes, make the visa system more efficient, and provide a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants so they can rectify their status with the law by paying taxes, learning English, and showing they have a criminal-free background. Immigration reform is important to help these men, women, and children be reunited with their families and achieve legal status so they can work, study, and continue to contribute to our communities. Immigration reform is not only morally right, it is also the most practical response to the broken immigration system, and would benefit our economy – by some estimates by adding \$1.5 trillion to GDP over ten years.

Americans know the immigration system is broken, and they want it fixed. By a 3:1 margin, voters nationwide want to turn undocumented immigrants into taxpaying American citizens. We have a chance, right before us, to transform a dysfunctional, unjust, anti-family system into something that is the best of who we are, while helping our economy.

Why should churches and communities get involved?

We are all God's children and care about the well-being of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Our communities suffer when U.S. immigration laws offer no hope for undocumented immigrants, separated families, or exploited workers to achieve a better life. Millions of people across the country have proven their commitment to immigration reform by hosting hundreds of prayer vigils, sending hundreds of thousands of postcards to Congress, and serving immigrants and refugees every day.

Separated families, exploited workers, and devastated communities cannot wait any longer for immigration reform, and people of faith should not be silent about a dehumanizing, broken immigration system. Reforming our immigration system would not only help immigrants, but the United States as a whole by leveling the playing field, improving workplace standards, reducing undocumented immigration, and adding \$1.5 trillion to the U.S. economy. We need Congress to enact immigration reform this year, and for them to do that, we must show that people of faith, service providers, and entire communities care about and stand in solidarity with immigrants by advocating for immigration reform. As people who care about our communities, it is our responsibility to see that everyone is treated with respect and can access the opportunity for a better life.

3 WAYS YOU CAN HELP ENACT IMMIGRATION REFORM IN 2010

- 1) **PRAY**—engage your faith community in the movement for immigration reform by including concerns for immigrants in your community’s religious observances. There are several times for such action in the coming months:

Immigrant Sabbath April 30-May 2:

- Ask your clergy or lay leaders to offer a sermon, litany or prayers for immigrants within your community’s regular worship services.
- Invite members of your community to write letters in support of immigration reform, and incorporate a blessing of the letters during your worship service as a sign of your community’s ministry of justice.

Mother’s Day, May 12, and Father’s Day, June 20:

- Pray for parents all over the world who struggle to provide for their families, and for parents who make the difficult decision to face separation from their children in order to give them a better future.
- Invite members of your community to send homemade cards to your Members of Congress, urging them to support immigration reform the keeps families together.

- 2) **EDUCATE AND ORGANIZE**—raise awareness of the need for immigration reform in your community and engage others in speaking out in support.

Host a movie screening or community educational event:

- Look for suggestions for movies at <http://supportimmigrationreform.org/resources>
- Arrange a public screening of the movie, invite participants to stay for conversation afterward, and provide ways for participants to advocate for immigration reform at the event (writing letters, signing postcards, etc.).
- Sign up for CWS advocacy alerts at <http://supportimmigrationreform.org/signup>

- 3) **CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS**—Make sure your Members of Congress know what you’re learning about the need for immigration reform, and what your friends, colleagues and faith community are talking about.

- Find out who your Representative and Senators are by visiting <http://www.house.gov> and www.senate.gov , or call (202) 224-3121.
- Call your Congress members’ local office to let them know why you support immigration reform, organize your faith community to write letters, invite members of Congress to your events, or arrange to visit their local offices.
- **Remember, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day are good days to remind Members of Congress that immigrant families need immigration reform *now*.**

For more information, contact yschock@churchworldservice.org.

READY for even deeper involvement? Become a Service Speaks Advocate

- Organize an Immigration Action Team in your congregation to help lead members in Bible study, prayer, visits with members of Congress, and other actions for immigration reform.
- Learn more about organizations and congregations that provide services to immigrants in your state, and help connect their direct service with advocacy efforts in support of immigration reform to show that ***Service Speaks louder than words.***

Contact jsmyers@churchworldservice.org for more information or to apply.