

2010 Franciscan Federation Resolution
**Immigration: As Franciscan Pilgrims and Strangers,
We Stand in Solidarity with Migrants**

Statement of Resolution: Be it resolved that the members of the Franciscan Federation, recognizing that we ourselves are pilgrims and strangers, stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are migrants by promoting federally legislated comprehensive immigration reform by prayer and action to change attitudes and procedures that discriminate or violate human rights and dignity.

Background: We live in a nation founded by immigrants; many of the founders of our congregations were themselves immigrants, dedicated to building a nation and serving all of God's people. Immigrant peoples continue to serve this country, by offering their skills, talents, labors and values. Many of these immigrants are compelled to leave their own homes out of economic necessity in order to provide even the most basic of needs for themselves and their families. St. Francis often reminded his followers that we are all aliens and exiles, pilgrims and strangers on Earth. As followers of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, we stand especially in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are poor, marginalized, looked down upon or mistreated.

Serious issues regarding immigration continue to escalate, yet the United States Congress has failed to adequately address these issues and pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation. Since 2008, the Franciscan Federation has addressed the issue of immigration, in our annual resolutions. As the Franciscan Federation, we support comprehensive immigration reform legislation that:

- keeps immigrant families together;
- adopts effective and humane enforcement policies;
- allows alternatives to detention and/or detention policies that comply with International Law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- ensures due process protections;
- recognizes the demand for unskilled labor and protects all workers' rights;
- ensures that immigrants without legal status have a path toward citizenship.

Many of our members live, minister, and advocate with immigrant communities. We experience existing US immigration laws and procedures as outdated and inadequate. The need for comprehensive immigration reform is urgent.

RATIONALE: As Franciscans, we aim to transform hatred to love, despair to hope, sadness to joy, and darkness to light for all our brothers and sisters. Therefore, we call for and support a federal immigration policy that is compassionate, comprehensive and just. We need this policy to insure that our immigrant brothers and sisters (minoritas) will be treated with respect.

Without a federal policy, states will make their own laws which may not show compassion for individuals trying to support their families. There are 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. They are hard working people who need a legalization program whereby, without fear, they will register with the federal government, pay fees and taxes, and positively blend in with our society. We need a federal policy that creates safe borders where people can cross legally and not die on the way or be sent to detention centers where they may be mistreated, housed alongside persons convicted of a criminal offense, and/or kept indefinitely. The backlog of family based petitions needs to be expedited, so that people do not have to enter the country without documents in order to be reunited with their loved ones. As Franciscans, we commit our lives to serving the poor, especially those marginalized by society. It follows that we express our solidarity with immigrants through our work, our prayer and our actions.

Call to Respond

Let us, as Members of the Franciscan Federation, address the needs of our times, as we respond individually and collectively to the issue of *Comprehensive Immigration Reform in the United States of America*. Be it resolved that:

- the Members respond prayerfully, engaging in prayer services, remembrances and intercessions during liturgies and other such occasions;
- the Members become better educated about the issues related to Comprehensive Immigration Reform through newsletters, internet searches and email alerts, and other informational sources deemed appropriate; that members will share with their communities, parishes, family members and others, what they have learned;
- the members commit to appropriately responding to prejudices, inaccurate information, misconceptions and the like, when faced with opportunities to do so;
- the Members engage in advocacy efforts such as petitions and postcard campaigns, calls, letters and visits to legislators, letters to the editor, nonviolent marches, vigils and demonstrations, and other advocacy opportunities as they arise;
- the Members engage in specific advocacy efforts so that Comprehensive Immigration Reform includes:
 - protection of undocumented workers from exploitation, discrimination, detention and deportation; and legal accountability for those who perpetrate these abuses
 - efforts to keep families together
 - effective and humane enforcement policies and due legal processes
 - alternatives to immigrant detention
- the Members are encouraged to collaborate with appropriate organizations working toward Comprehensive Immigration Reform, by engaging in networking meetings, collective actions, and other such advocacy efforts, and financially support these organizations when possible;
- the Members, Communities, and Region Chairs keep records of their activities in order to make them known to the entire Federation at the subsequent Annual Federation Conference.

Franciscan Action Network members and advocates are invited to join with the efforts of the **USCCB's Justice for Immigrants Coalition** and other supporters of immigrants to let our Members of Congress know that we support just, humane, fair, and comprehensive immigration reform.

<http://www.franciscanaction.org/>

<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/>

The Campaign to Reform Immigration for America is a united national effort that brings together individuals and grassroots organizations with the mission to build support for workable comprehensive immigration reform. The Campaign to Reform Immigration for America is, in part, a project of the Tides Advocacy Fund.

<http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/>

America's Voice speaks directly to key audiences through the mainstream, new, and Spanish-language media, conducts cutting edge public opinion research, communications, and online campaigns, and supports courageous leaders from all walks of life who are standing up for workable comprehensive immigration reform now.

<http://americasvoiceonline.org/>

NETWORK, a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace – educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

<http://www.networklobby.org/>

Since 1910, **Catholic Charities USA** has served as a national advocate for the most vulnerable in our nation, including children, the elderly, the disabled, immigrants, and those who live in both rural and urban communities.

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Working for a more just and peaceful world is an integral component of LCWR's vision and goals. While many member congregations are actively engaged in efforts

promoting social, economic, and earth justice, LCWR provides opportunities for addressing issues of concern with a corporate voice by taking action on resolutions approved at the national assembly.

<http://www.lcwr.org/lcwr/socialjustice/socialjusticeoverview.htm>

For a detailed list of other local and national organizations working towards comprehensive immigration reform, please visit:

<http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/blog/about/organizations/>

Origin of Proposal

JPIC Coordinators and Region Chairs: Srs. Amalia Vivian, Joan Brown, Glenna Czachor, Diane Marie Collins, Elizabeth Deligio, Francis Marie Duncan, Marilyn Geiger, Grace Golata, Kathleen Grace, Karen Hartman, Mary Jeanine Heath, Maureen Irvin, Betty Kane, Janet Kramer, Mary Kuhlman, Patricia Larkin, Bea Leising, Mary Ann Mueller, Marilyn Renninger, Julie Ann Sheahan, Margaret Sikora, Jane Tobin, Jeanne Marie Toriskie, Marge Wissman, and Irene Senn.

National Office: Ann Lyons and Margaret Magee.