



New Hampshire Council of Churches

People of faith strengthening New Hampshire communities.

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Joint Statement on Immigration

The New Hampshire Council of Churches, an ecumenical Christian body of ten diverse denominations including Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian traditions, believe that both our religious traditions and our national history point to the necessity of a moral response to the issue of immigration.

With the exception of Native Americans, the United States is a nation of immigrants. Most of our ancestors arrived here from other nations and began their lives in the United States as strangers and sojourners seeking refuge and opportunity in this land.

Our religious traditions also point us toward care and concern for immigrants. The first books of the Bible chronicle the wanderings of the Hebrew people in their search for a land where they might find safety and peace. In the New Testament Jesus taught that the practice of welcoming the stranger is as essential to a just society as is feeding the hungry (see Matthew 25:35, 43).

Our member denominations have spoken with one voice on this issue, recommending reforms in our national immigration policy which uphold the God-given dignity of every person.

The key principles expressed in our denominations' statements on immigration include:

- Support measures to more deeply understand the root causes of migration
- Create a process for undocumented persons to earn legal status and citizenship
- Uphold family unity as a priority in immigration policies
- Protect workers and provide legal avenues for migrant workers
- Restore due process protections and reform detention policies
- Facilitate immigrant integration
- Provide a process toward naturalization which is navigable and affordable
- Align immigration enforcement with humanitarian values.

In summary, our national history and our faith-based mandate to welcome the stranger commit us, the member denominations of the NH Council of Churches, to care for and stand with immigrants. While affirming the right and responsibility of our nation to control its borders and to ensure the security of its citizens, we seek reforms in our immigration laws and practices that will more effectively honor and protect the fundamental dignity of all human beings.

Adopted by the Board of Directors May 20, 2010

Member Denominations: American Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Friends, Greek Orthodox, Presbyterian Church/USA, Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Unitarian Universalist