

March, 2010

**Re: Ohio Faith Leaders Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform – Now**

Dear:

(Personalized introduction)

We appeal to you in our personal and representative capacities as faith leaders throughout Ohio to take leadership to enact Comprehensive Immigration Reform legislation **now**, which will be good for Ohio and for the nation.

Every day we see throughout Ohio – in our parishes, congregations, and faith communities, in our schools and service programs, and in our communities – the exploitation of undocumented workers, the plight of separated families and young people denied college for lack of papers, the escalation of community fear due to indiscriminate raids and local enforcement, and the horror of inadequate immigration detention facilities. We must fulfill our moral obligation as faith leaders to end this unnecessary suffering by advocating for equitable immigration policies that unite families and treat all people with dignity and respect.

The faith community has consistently advocated for immigration laws to better reflect the heart of God, which calls us to love and care for the stranger in our midst. Yet we seek immigration reform not solely for reasons of humanity and morality, but also because this country needs immigration reform more than ever. Fixing the broken immigration system would benefit Ohio economically and would strengthen our communities.

We the undersigned come from various faith traditions in Ohio, yet we are united in our common commitment to manifest the moral imperative to love our neighbor. We specifically, and **urgently**, seek your visionary leadership to enact immigration reform that reflects the policy priorities set forth in the national Interfaith Platform on Humane Immigration Reform (attached), including a commitment to:

- (1) Uphold family unity as a priority of all immigration policies**
- (2) Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn their legal status and eventual citizenship**
- (3) Protect workers and provide efficient channels of entry for new migrant workers**
- (4) Facilitate immigrant integration**
- (5) Restore due process protections and reform detention policies**
- (6) Align the enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values.**

Should the reforms we seek be enacted, families will be reunited, immigrant students will go to college, due process will be restored, the immigration system will be orderly, enforcement of immigration laws will be humane, and undocumented immigrants will be able to rectify their legal status to fully participate in society.

We ask you to stand with us – **on the right side of history** – knowing that we have followed our religious teachings to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor. By so doing, we will make Ohio a better state, our country a stronger nation, and our world a safer place by providing an equitable society and hope for future generations.

We, the undersigned, submit the attached letter, with attached Interfaith Platform for Humane Immigration Reform, to \_\_\_\_\_ this day of March \_\_, 2010.

Name:

Religious office:

We, the undersigned, submit the attached letter, with attached Interfaith Platform for Humane Immigration Reform, to Senator Voinovich this day of March \_\_\_, 2010:

**Ohio denominations, dioceses, congregations, and religious orders and affiliations:**

The Catholic Conference of Ohio  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati  
Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr, Archbishop

Bishop of Cleveland  
Most Rev. Richard G. Lennon  
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland  
Most Rev. Roger W. Gries

Bishop of Byzantine Eparchy of Parma  
Most Rev. John Kudrick

Bishop of Steubenville  
Most Rev. R. Daniel Conlon

Bishop of Toledo  
Most Rev. Leonard P. Blair

Bishop of Youngstown  
Most Rev. George V. Murry S.J.

Bishop of Romanian Catholic Eparchy of Canton  
Most Rev. J. Michael Botean

Apostolic Administrator of St. Josaphat Ukrainian Eparchy, Parma  
Most Rev. John Bura

The United Methodist Church  
West Ohio Conference  
Rev. Bruce R. Ough, Resident Bishop  
Rev. Deanna E. Stickley-Miner, Director of Connectional Mission and Justice

The United Methodist Church  
East Ohio Conference  
Rev. John L. Hopkins, Resident Bishop

The Episcopal Church  
Southern Diocese of Ohio  
Rt. Rev. Thomas Breidenthal, Presiding Bishop  
Rev. Canon Karl D. Ruttan

Rev. Deniray Mueller  
Rev. Joan Grant

The Episcopal Church  
Diocese of Ohio  
Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Presiding Bishop  
Rev. Canon Mark Robinson

United Church of Christ  
Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, General Minister and President  
Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries and Global Ministries  
Rev. Stephen L. Sterner, Executive Minister, Local Church Ministries  
Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo, Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries  
Rev. Dr. Edith Rasell, Minister for Workplace Justice  
Rev. W. Evan Golder, Editor Emeritus, United Church News

United Church of Christ  
Rev. Robert R. Molsberry, Ohio Conference Minister  
Rev. G. Forrest Hoppe, Executive Minister, Central Southeast Ohio Association

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Synod of the Covenant  
Rev. Dr. George Mehaffey, former Moderator

Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Presbytery of Scioto Valley  
Rev. Sharon Sauer, Chair Peacemaking and Justice Committee

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregation  
Ohio-Meadville District  
Rev. Joan Van Becelaere, District Executive

Vineyard Church of Columbus  
Rich Nathan, Senior Pastor

First Church of God  
Bishop Timothy J. Clarke, Senior Pastor

Sisters of Mercy of Ohio  
Sister Rose Marie Tresp, Director of Justice  
Sister Kathleen Wade

The Episcopal Church  
Hocking Valley Deanery  
Rev. Deacon Dr. Connie Jo McCarroll, D.O.

The Ohio Council of Churches  
Mr. Tom Smith, Public Policy Director

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Mr. Donald Furbee, President Columbus Chapter

Cincinnati Faith & Justice Network  
Rev. Dr. Troy Jackson, Pastor, University Christian Church

Xavier University  
Interfaith Community Engagement Center  
Rabbi Abie Ingber

Alliance of Baptists  
Rev. Stephen A. Hammond, President Ohio Chapter

We Believe Ohio  
Rev. Timothy C. Ahrens, Senior Minister, The First Congregational Church of Columbus  
Rev. Mark W. Diemer, Pastor, Grace of God Lutheran Church

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice  
Rev. Michael Maloney, Organizing Chair

Church World Service  
Rev. Virginia Lohmann Bauman, Ohio Director

First Christian Assembly of God  
Pastor Chris Beard

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens  
Rev. Evan P. Young, Pastor

St. John's Episcopal Church  
Rev. Deacon Irene Radcliff

Westerville United Church of Christ  
Rev. Harold Steindham, Senior Pastor

Broad Street United Methodist Church  
Rev. David W. Meredith, Senior Pastor

Trinity Episcopal Church  
Rev. Deacon Joan Grant

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer  
Rev. Deacon Gary R. Lubin

Temple Israel  
Rabbi Misha Zinkow

St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
Rev. Thomas J. Fehr

Fairmoor Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Kristin Schutte

Church of Our Savior  
Rev. Deacon Timothy G. Borah

Highlands United Church of Christ  
Rev. Dr. Gary Percesepe, Pastor

Congregation Tifereth Israel  
Cantor Jack Chomsky

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Youngstown  
Rev. Matt Alspaugh, Consulting Minister

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church  
Rev. Deacon Mooydeen C. Frees

City Gospel Mission  
Rev. Roger Howell, President

Community Refugee and Immigration Service (CRIS)  
Ms. Angie Plummer, Executive Director

The United Methodist Church  
West Ohio Conference  
United Methodist Women  
Mrs. Sue Stutz, President

The United Methodist Church  
East Ohio Conference  
Ms. Belinda Wing, Chair Committee on Church and Society

Church Women United  
Mrs. Jeanne Watters  
Mrs. Peggy Burke, President

Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland  
Rev. Marguerite C. Clason, Minister Emerita

Rev. Alicia Rivers  
United Methodist Commissioned Deacon

Rev. David O. McCoy  
Episcopal priest, retired

Rev. John Stull  
Presbyterian minister, retired