

March 7, 2016

Dear Arizona Senators and Representatives,

As faith leaders from many different traditions, we write with grave concern regarding the numerous anti-refugee and anti-immigrant bills under consideration in the Arizona State Legislature. As people of faith, we look first to our common values rooted in our sacred texts that remind us to love our neighbor and welcome the sojourner among us. As Leviticus 19:34 (CE) reminds us:

“Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”

Yet for the last decade, Arizona has been plagued with the most unwelcoming and discriminatory policies in the entire country. The pinnacle of these harsh laws was in 2010 when SB 1070 passed. This law, which promotes racial profiling, has stained our state’s reputation and caused a boycott that continues to this day. An independent research center found that several months after SB 1070 passed, \$45 million was lost from canceled conventions, a ripple effect that cost the state an estimated 2,876 jobs and \$253 million in economic output.<sup>1</sup> The economic damage was so tremendous, sixty CEOs of businesses came out to stop more anti-immigrant legislation from moving forward in 2011. Since that time, the legislature has rightly steered clear of highly divisive laws that unfairly targeting immigrants and that lead to highly contentious litigation.

Immigrants and refugees offer great contributions to our communities and to our economy, but more importantly, they are children of God and our brothers and sisters that deserve dignity and respect. As people of faith, we are called to walk alongside the most vulnerable among us. This is why we are united in opposing the current proposed legislation in the Arizona Senate that would once again discriminate against immigrants and refugees in immoral and unjust ways.

[SB 1377](#) would mandate the strictest sentencing for undocumented immigrants who have committed even minor crimes, and would make them ineligible for probation no matter their conduct. Should this become law, strict sentencing also could apply to humanitarian aid workers or members of congregations providing assistance to undocumented immigrants. People of faith have joined the growing chorus of voices, and political leaders from both parties, in calling for a reexamination of mandatory sentencing laws that have fueled mass incarceration, wasting lives and taxpayer resources. This bill heads us in the wrong direction, imposing lengthy and inflexible jail terms on non-violent offenders.

[HB 2223](#) would force local police to collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Such legislation would undermine community-policing practices and compromise broader public safety, as victims of crimes will be more fearful to go to the police. Additionally, HB 2223 aims to take away the potential for a municipality to have their own identification program. This

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/economic-impact-arizona-style-sb-1070-copycat-legislation>



is unfortunate, as identification requirements increasingly gate-keep almost every aspect of daily life; without the right form of ID, individuals may not be able to open a bank account or even cash a check, see a doctor at a hospital, register their child for school, file a complaint with the police department, or even collect a package from the post office.

[HB 2370](#) would prohibit the use of Arizona state resources to serve refugees, unaccompanied children, and other non-U.S. citizens. It would not only severely restrict refugee resettlement in Arizona, but also prevent refugees and children fleeing violence and persecution from seeking safety. Refugees are already the most scrutinized individuals to travel to the United States, undergoing name, biographic and bio-metric checks; medical screenings; forensic testing of documents; DNA testing for family reunification cases; and in-person interviews by the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of State, Department of Defense, and National Counterterrorism Center. This bill does nothing to make communities safer, and instead is designed to turn away the most vulnerable refugees and unaccompanied children fleeing extreme forms of physical and sexual violence.

As faith leaders, we work to uplift and support immigrants and refugees in our midst. We support policies and programs that help build welcoming communities, such as sanctuary cities and municipal identification programs. Excluding those who are in their most dire need simply because of their national origin or faith background is immoral and unjust.

We want to see Arizona become a state that welcomes immigrants, refugees, and all people. Instead of passing more mean-spirited, anti-immigrant or anti-refugee laws, we should be working to repeal SB 1070 and pushing forward with policies that recognize the great contributions immigrants and refugees bring to our communities, our congregations, our economy, and our lives. Please help stop these immoral and unjust laws. Vote no on SB 1377, HB 2223, HB 2370, and any other proposal attacking refugees and immigrants.

Sincerely,

Reverend Brady Abel, United Church of Sun City

Father Richard Aguilar, Episcopal Diocese of Arizona

Faith Leader Amy Altshuler, Anti-Defamation League - AZ

Reverend Rosemary Anderson, Tempe First United Methodist Church

Pastor Don Benton, Scottsdale United Methodist Church

Reverend Doug Bland, Tempe Community Christian Church

Sister Mary Richardine Blue, Sisters of Mercy

Pastor Emery Boepple, United Churches Fellowship- UCC

Reverend Kate Bradsen, St. Andrew's, Tucson

Reverend Sherry Brady, First United Methodist Church, Safford, AZ

Reverend Sandra Britton, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center



Faith Leader Lori Bryant, First Christian Church, DOC, Tucson

Reverend Joyce Buekers, The Harp Foundation/Church of the Beatitudes

Rabbi Erica Burech, Congregation Merkaz Ha-Iyr

Reverend Andy Burnette, Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Father Sean Carroll, Kino Border Initiative

Rabbi Samuel Cohon, Temple Emanu-El

Faith Leader Carol Consalvo, National Council of Jewish Women

Faith Leader Nancy DeArman, FIRST Christian Church

Faith Leader Paul DeArman, First Christian Church

Reverend Inge Detweiler, Rincon UCC

Pastor Jim Dew, Santa Cruz Lutheran Church

Reverend Mary Alice Do, First Christian Church Tucson

Faith Leader Arlene Dominguez, Shadow Rock UCC

Reverend Nancy Elsenheimer, Ktizo United Church of Christ

Faith Leader Adam Estle, Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding

Reverend Glenn Farley, Sedona Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Reverend John Fife, Southside Presbyterian Church

Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix

Faith Leader Monica Friedl, St Thomas More Catholic Newman Center

Reverend Matthew Funke Crary, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Green Valley in Amado

Reverend Joanne Giannino, Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Rabbi Sarah Grafstein, Spirit of the desert

Reverend Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson

Reverend Jerry Haas, United Methodist Church

Sister Marilyn Jean Hagedorn, Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Reverend Alison Harrington, Southside Presbyterian Church



Faith Leader Susan Harris, First Christian Church (Disciples)

Reverend Kenneth Heintzeman, Shadow Rock United Church of Christ

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Reverend Pamela Hines, West Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Reverend Edward Hunt, Presbytery de Cristo

Reverend Dr. Elizabeth B. Johnson, Shepherd of the Hills United Church of Christ –  
Congregational

Reverend Teresa Jones, Sacred Space

Rabbi Elana Kanter, The New Shul

Reverend Kenneth Kennon, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Sister Mary Kirkhoff, Medical Mission Sisters

Pastor Jack Knox, Mennonite

Sister Leonette Kochan, OSF, Catholic Diocese of Tucson

Father Robert Kose, Casa San Jose

Reverend Robert Koth, First Congregational United Church of Christ Phoenix

Rabbi Robert Kravitz

Sister Vera Lander, Pima Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Reverend Linda Lawrence, Sky Island Unitarian Universalist Church

Reverend Eric Ledermann, University Presbyterian Church, Tempe

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Faith Leader Nancy Linthicum, The Good Shepherd UCC

Reverend Donald Longbottom, Church of the Beatitudes UCC

Reverend Dr. William Lyons, Designated Conference Minister, Southwest Conference United  
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Sister Eileen Mahony, Sisters of St. Agnes



Sister Jean Mariani, Santacatalina Catholic Parish

Faith Leader Johnny Martin, Sun Devils Are Better Together

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Reverend Tom Martinez, Desert Palm UCC

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Faith Leader Michael Nealen, Most Holy Trinity Parish

Faith Leader Ann Nichols, Moderator, First Christian Church

Sister Noelle O'Shea, sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ)

Sister Donna Otter, Sisters of St. Joseph

Sister Sr. Ellen Pachmayer, Santa Cruz Catholic School

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Sister Ruth Reischman, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

Sister Carla Riach, San Xavier Mission

Reverend Susan Ringler, Guardian Angels Catholic Community



Sister Eve Rosenberg, Friends Southwest Center

Father Rosemary Sampon, Medical Mission Sisters

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Sister Mary Sears, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

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Reverend Elizabeth Smith, de Cristo Presbytery

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Reverend Tina Squire, Hospice Chaplain

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Reverend Anne Strong, St Philips Episcopal Church

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Reverend Stephen Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod ELCA

Reverend Erin Tamayo, Presbytery of the Grand Canyon

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Faith Leader Joanne Welter, San Augustine Cathedral



Reverend Walter Wieder, Unitarian Universalist of Surprise

Reverend David Wilkinson, Retired United Methodist Clergy person

Reverend Mary Workman, First Christian Church, Tucson

Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz, Valley Beit Midrash

Sister Alice Zachmann, SSND

