

**Methodists Associated to Represent the Cause of Hispanic Americans
(MARCHA)
Statement on Immigration Reform**

MARCHA opposes current Congressional legislation that seeks to criminalize undocumented persons living in our towns, cities, and States, as well as those who are in our churches.

Current legislation on immigration is an affront to the biblical mandates to treat the alien and strangers among us with fairness, justice and love (Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 24).

We urge Congress to develop policies that are consistent with humanitarian values: treat all individuals with respect and protect individuals and organizations who act as Good Samaritans without regard to the immigration status of the persons they serve.

We believe that Congress must enact comprehensive immigration reform that provides an opportunity for all undocumented immigrants, who are contributing to this country through their work, to meet reasonable criteria and, over time, pursue a path to legalization and citizenship. We support earned legalization.

Congress must work to reform our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce the time families have to wait in order to be re-united with their loved ones. Congress must create legal avenues for migrant workers and their families to enter the U.S. and work in a safe, legal and orderly manner with their rights fully protected.

Congress should create an earned legalization program for 10-12 million immigrants currently living and working in the U.S. In addition, Congress must safeguard asylum seekers and ensure that they have an opportunity to prove that they deserve asylum.

Congress must ensure the rights and dignity of all immigrants and foreign visitors, and ensure the protection of the basic human rights of immigrants and refugees, such as the right to an education, adequate health care, and due process of law.

MARCHA urges Congress to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and to grant permanent residence to college-bound students who have grown-up in the U.S.

Congress must understand that if an unjust bill like H.R. 4437 becomes law people of faith will have no other choice than to follow the commands of Jesus to minister to the stranger and to obey God's word even if that leads us to civil disobedience.

MARCHA calls on all United Methodists, especially elected officials, to do justice and love mercy, to provide sanctuary to the immigrant community and to stand for our brothers and sisters in our churches for whom current immigration debate is a matter of life and death.

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