



Justice and Witness Ministries

100 Maryland Ave NE

Washington, D.C. 20002

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Dear Members of Congress,

The United Church of Christ is an Immigrant Welcoming Church, honoring the profound struggles migrants who come to the United States face in search of security and opportunity, and celebrating the myriad contributions migrants offer to our communities.

As regional representatives of the United Church of Christ, we stand in vehement opposition to the Administration's continued campaign to deny welcome to migrants by instituting a host of draconian practices including family separation, indefinite child detention, deplorable detention conditions, and stripping away legal access to the asylum process. These ongoing efforts to terrorize, degrade, and demonize migrants are immoral and unacceptable. With the rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric, we have seen a troubling increase in violence perpetrated against migrants. As people of faith, the coordinated diminishment of our fellow human beings - especially children - is in direct contravention with the Gospel, which teaches us to welcome the sojourner and love our neighbor.

In preparation for the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations discussions we urge your compassionate response to the following:

As Congress debates the Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations legislation they must reject increased funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that is used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for immoral detention and deportation of migrants. Instead, Congress must invest in programs that serve our communities, offer true humanitarian assistance and protect human dignity.

In addition to rejecting overspending on detention, deportation, and border militarization, Congress must enact stringent oversight mechanisms on existing DHS enforcement practices. The crass overspending and harmful enforcement activities of ICE and CBP have resulted in the mass and sometimes fatal mistreatment of migrants.

Finally, Congress must invest in community-based alternatives to detention. These alternatives shift the paradigm and bias away from detention and toward non-restrictive alternatives that support individuals who are navigating the immigration and asylum systems.

The monetary cost of these programs and policies is astronomical, the human cost, incalculable. Where we put our money speaks to a larger truth about who we are as a country. The current bias toward detention and banishment and the emphasis on criminalization, deny migrants' humanity and dignity.

In congregations and communities across the country, our churches are in solidarity with and welcoming our immigrant neighbors. Our faith community has a strong history of objecting to inhumane conditions and speaking out that all people should be treated with compassion and care.

We are bolstered by our belief that extending a welcome to migrants not only helps communities flourish but that it is living into a higher moral call. We strongly urge you to reject increases in detention, deportation and border militarization funding, commit to strong and meaningful oversight of DHS policies and practices, and earnestly seek more compassionate and humane alternatives to detention.

Faithfully,

Rev. Campbell Lovett	Michigan Conference
Rev. Dr. Marc Ian Stewart	Montana - Northern Wyoming Conference
Rev. Shana Johnson	Illinois South Conference
Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel	Missouri Mid-South Conference
Rev. Franz S. Rigert	Wisconsin Conference
Rev. Marilyn B. Kendrix	Rhode Island Conference
Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates	Penn Northeast Conference
Rev. Shari Prestemon	Minnesota Conference
Rev. David Long-Higgins	Ohio Conference
Rev. Char Burch	Southeast Conference
Rev. Dr. Don Longbottom	South Central Conference
Rev. Michael Denton	Pacific Northwest Conference
Rev. Dr. William M. Lyons	Southwest Conference
Rev. Dr. Diane Weible	Northern California Nevada Conference
Rev. John Vertigan	Florida Conference
Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak	Vermont Conference
Rev. Justo González II	Illinois Conference
Rev. Don Remick	Massachusetts Conference
Rev. Gordon M. Rankin	New Hampshire Conference
Rev. Chad Abbott	Indiana-Kentucky Conference
Rev. David Ackerman	Penn West Conference
Rev. Kent J. Siladi	Connecticut Conference
Dr. Edith Guffey	Kansas-Oklahoma Conference
Rev. David R Gaewski	New York Conference
Rev. Deborah J Blood	Maine Conference
Rev. Molly Carlson	Central Pacific Conference
Rev. Bridgit F. Stevens	Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conference
Rev. Freeman L. Palmer	Central Atlantic Conference
Rev. David R. Gaewski	New York Conference