



IMMIGRATION REFORM

As Baptist Women of North America, we feel compelled to speak out against the inhumane and unjust treatment of immigrants and those perceived to be immigrants across the United States.

Every country has the right to protect its borders, but lawless capture, detainment, and deportation of people without due process violates the U.S. constitution and the Christian principles of love and justice we believe apply to all people. In recent months, many immigrants have arbitrarily lost the legal status that allows them to live and work in the United States. This loss resulted in their detention and deportation when they had been in the United States legally.

Immigrants have contributed significantly to America's strength, and we grieve that recently their contributions are denigrated and dismissed. We grieve that their hard work has not provided immigrants a pathway for them to stay. We grieve as houses of worship lose their congregants. We grieve as mothers are taken from their children and fathers are sent to foreign countries with no process to reunite them with their families. We grieve as these inhumane practices degrade the United States' moral standing in the world and divide the nation.

We stand against indiscriminate deportations. We stand against hateful speech and violence toward immigrants and law enforcement. We stand with our immigrant friends and neighbors who live in fear in spite of having legal documents. We stand with those providing counsel, comfort, prayer, and guidance to those in detention. We stand with those who, like us, serve a God who loves all people and instructs us to love others as God has loved us.

And we pray. We pray for the heartbroken people devastated by these actions. We pray for leaders to stop this inhumane treatment and find a real solution to the immigration issues facing the United States. We pray that those who have for so long benefited from this broken system will now become part of the solution. We pray for an outpouring of Americans demanding the government uphold the God-given basic human rights of every person living in the United States.

The Bible, our guiding text for Christian faith, instructs us to care for and treat the "stranger" as our neighbor. (Leviticus 19:33, Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Matthew 25:35-40) That instruction is just as applicable today as we seek to follow Christian teaching regarding immigrants within our country.

We join with other Christians who pray each day for a God-honoring solution to immigration reform that protects human rights and access to due process. Mistreatment of immigrants not only injures those detained and deported and all who love them, but also puts at risk basic human rights for each of us. To accept this immoral treatment and dehumanization of anyone in the United States makes the country less safe for all of us. Further, acceptance of the mistreatment of immigrants stands in stark contrast to our global work for human rights and undermines our ability to work for positive change in the world.

We join our voice with our sisters and brothers across denominations in agreement that immigration reform and national security are not in conflict. Other countries have been able to balance an immigration policy that provides security and humanitarian relief and we believe the United States is also capable of such reform. We ask the U. S. legislators to work in a bipartisan way to create the policies that allow us to regain our legacy as human rights advocates. If we continue on the path we are currently on, our place in history will be alongside cruel regimes we have historically condemned. If we choose to ignore what is happening and refuse to fight for a solution, the moral injury taking place will scar us for generations to come.

Approved statement of the Executive Board of Baptist Women of North America
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Baptist Women of North America is comprised of 15 Baptist women's organizations representing over 10,000,000 million women across Canada and the United States.