

A photograph of several construction workers on a house under construction. The workers are on ladders and scaffolding, working on the roof and exterior walls. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The workers are wearing hard hats and work clothes. The house has a gabled roof and a white door. The overall tone is one of active construction and community building.

Immigration and People of Faith

A Toolbox for North Carolina
*Building awareness for a
stronger community*



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Area Office of the Carolinas



**North Carolina
Council of Churches**

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Introduction

Introduction

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers too...” (Deuteronomy 10:19)

Thank you for your interest in immigration issues and for educating yourself and your community about immigrants. One of the biggest challenges facing our nation is how to integrate newcomers into society with a fair and humane approach – as Quakers say, how to recognize that of God in each person. Unfortunately, the national conversation about immigration has spiraled down into a polarizing debate too often plagued by misinformation and fear.

But it doesn't have to be that way. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC-NC) and the NC Council of Churches (NCCC) have partnered to compile this Toolbox on immigration issues. We're pleased to offer an alternative way of considering difficult issues by utilizing facts, the human story, and local opportunities for learning more about our new neighbors.

Together, we have the opportunity to construct a society characterized by hospitality and justice. In the face of divisive and seemingly intractable debates, sometimes the best thing we can do is turn off TV's talking heads and instead start to get to know our neighbors. What are their stories? For our new neighbors, what brings them to North Carolina? What dreams do they have for their family? What are they "building"? How can we learn to build it together?

This guide is intended to serve as a starting place, providing you with the tools you need to begin tackling complicated and (sometimes) controversial immigration issues in your congregation or group. We have compiled some insightful articles and factsheets from reliable sources that we have found useful to provide background on this complex subject, books and films to delve deeper, worship resources to utilize in your congregation, as well the tools to

act on your knowledge (including local opportunities for volunteering and/or engaging with immigrants). AFSC and NCCC do not officially partner with or endorse any of the mentioned organizations or article authors; we are simply offering a collection of resources to help start the conversation.

We encourage you to utilize this toolbox as fully as possible: browse through the articles, pull them out to copy and distribute, add new documents, and take advantage of the resources offered. In particular, we urge you to explore the online resources related to personal stories of immigrants (see page 38).

Special thanks to FaithAction International House, Dr. Mark Sills, Paul Mitchell, Tom Hayes, Rev. Kristina Johnson and Rev. Julie Peeples for their contributions to this project, individually and as a team. Special thanks also to photographer Jose Galvez (www.josegalvez.com), Todd Drake with UNC's Center for Global Initiatives, and Student Action with Farmworkers for generously donating the use of their images for this manual.

-Lori Fernald Khamala & Chris Liu-Beers

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization founded in 1917 that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Throughout its history, AFSC has stood with immigrants and refugees in the U.S. and internationally. Guided by the Quaker belief in the infinite worth of all people and by faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice, AFSC supports the rights and dignity of all immigrants, regardless of their legal status. www.afsc.org/greensboro, 336-854-0633, lkhamala@afsc.org.

From efforts on behalf of farmworkers, to encouraging the protection of God's earth, to exposing racism within the criminal justice system, the North Carolina Council of Churches is at the forefront of progressive social issues that go to the heart of whom God would have us to be. By drawing together members of 16 Christian denominations in this work, the Council also serves our other key focus, Christian unity. www.nccouncilofchurches.org, 919-828-6501, cliubeers@ncccouncilofchurches.org.

To order additional copies of this manual, please visit www.welcometheimmigrant.org/toolbox.

Dealing with Controversial Issues in Faith Communities

Dealing with Controversial Issues in Faith Communities

By Rev. Julie Peeples, 2009
Congregational United Church of Christ, Greensboro

The following are suggestions for beginning to help your faith community deal with controversial issues. These recommendations are based on my own experiences and those of other religious leaders I have known, along with various denominational/church/nonprofit resources.

Helping a congregation work through a “hot button” topic from a faith standpoint can be extremely challenging, and yet the spiritual rewards for a congregation can far exceed the difficulties. I encourage you to share any wisdom you have or gain, as it is far more helpful when we can share with one another what works rather than continuing to try and reinvent the wheel on our own. Blessings on your journey!

PREPARE

1. Pray for discernment and guidance.
2. Clarify your goals: Is there one specific outcome you are aiming for? Do you simply want to begin the discussion, or are you hoping for specific action? Is there a particular situation in your faith community that makes this a pressing and/or emotional issue?
3. Take time to sort through your own feelings/opinions/level of knowledge about this issue. Controversial issues are often complex, multi-layered; what aspects of it do you need to read up on? Decide whether you intend to remain neutral, or if you intend to make your opinions clear, but in a way that does not dismiss the feelings/opinions of others. *(Personally, I believe it is more effective to be clear about your stance, be honest about areas of uncertainty, but constantly make it clear you intend to listen with respect and to learn from all views.)*
4. Before taking any program plans to an official board, call upon a small group of trusted members with whom you can share your hopes and ideas, in confidence. With their help, consider carefully where your congregation is at present. Pertinent questions include:

-Is there currently any other conflict we are dealing with that might prevent a healthy discussion on this issue at this time?

-What is the status of relationships between staff and members?

-Has the professional leader of the congregation been in place long enough to have established some level of trust?

-What is the history of handling controversial issues in the congregation? Are there certain patterns to be aware of?

-What is the outcome desired?

-Will there be a vote of any kind at some point?

Carefully consider different models, choosing the elements that will most likely ensure a constructive, full conversation. Among the possibilities:

1. **Small Groups:** One model that has been very successful has been to set up a small group series of 4 to 6 weeks, repeated with new participants. Each session in the series would address a different aspect such as: scripture, legal/economic, cultural/historic, legislative, personal stories. Participants commit to all sessions, and trust is built over time, allowing transformation and growth to take place.
2. **Open Forums:** Present a series of forums and/or panel discussions where information is presented, followed by time for discussion. Keep in mind that open forums can be helpful, but those who are wrestling with the issue can be easily intimidated by the more vocal participants.
3. **Combination of Formats:** Use a combination of forums, debates, small group meetings, and panel discussions. Note that public events should always be followed up with opportunities for people to discuss what they've learned and to ask questions in a safe, well-facilitated setting.
4. **Established Groups:** Design or choose a study guide to be used by groups already established, such as adult classes, women's or men's groups, etc.

No matter what format you use, make use of personal stories – those whose lives are directly impacted by the issue (via video or in person), as well as stories shared by congregants. Few things have greater impact than stories!

Be prepared with intelligent, articulate resources representing a diversity of opinions. Encourage your

Dealing with Controversial Issues (continued)

congregants to use only reliable, well-respected resources. Make good use of denominational resources; there are local, state and national resources available as well. Invite people outside the congregation to offer various perspectives from their areas of expertise.

Make sure the appropriate bodies are fully informed about the program; solicit their active help in quieting the rumor mill.

In designing your program, be careful not to take on too much too soon. For example, if your congregation has not yet begun this conversation, don't start out with a program on the sanctuary movement or taking a position on a particular legislative bill. Begin with a more general treatment of the subject, then work gradually over time toward the more specific issues.

At the same time, don't settle for a surface level conversation. Go deeper. Keep in mind that those with very strong opinions may not change their views much. Focus most of your energy on those in the middle; many of them will welcome the opportunity to learn, to ask their questions, and to consider the issue thoughtfully.

IMPLEMENT

1. Do everything possible to create safe space for all. Establish guidelines, model respectful dialogue. Make clear what is and is not appropriate in discussions/forums/groups.
2. Make use of newsletter articles, sermons, website links, etc.
3. If you choose to address the issue in sermons, lift up the underlying values involved. Avoid haranguing, self-righteous tones and leaving people without an opportunity to respond. It is more effective to invite change than to induce guilt.
4. If at all possible, work toward consensus rather than up or down votes. Votes on controversial issues end up with winners, losers, and lingering resentments.
5. Keep praying. And practice good self-care – this is stressful work!
6. Remind people why it is important to consider current issues from a faith perspective.
7. If necessary, before beginning any program, consider which individuals might be the most

resistant or threatened by such a discussion or program. Pay these folks a visit, preferably with one of your leaders who is already “on board” with the idea. Invite the person to share their reservations or concerns and questions, and be ready to explain very clearly why you think this is necessary, why now, and how you think it will benefit the congregation.

8. Publicize your program(s) on this topic well. Make it clear that the intention is to create a safe space where ALL are welcome to come together to share their insights, to learn, to listen and to seek divine wisdom and direction. Don't assume anything – make all communication about this as clear and straightforward as possible.
9. Be patient. This issue is obviously very difficult for many to talk about. For some, it is their “line in the sand;” a matter they feel is connected with the most fundamental elements of society and religious life. At the same time, there will be others wanting the discussions to progress more quickly.

FOLLOW-UP

1. Be aware that this will be an on-going effort. Most congregations find that they reach a certain level of understanding, only to discover more issues or other groups of people they had not considered. It is a process.
2. Be aware, too, that this process, as challenging as it can be, also frequently results in blessings for the congregation in terms of spiritual renewal and outlook. Congregations grow in confidence when they can look back and know that they dealt with a “hot-button” issue with grace and integrity.
3. Consider what might be appropriate next steps: further study? An outreach effort? Political action?
4. Summarize and celebrate. With the help of congregation leaders and participants, write up a summary of the journey and the outcomes. Be honest about where there are areas of disagreement, point out blessings discovered along the way. And, celebrate the good! Remind the congregation that they have courageously worked through a difficult issue and lived to tell the tale. Consider a special service of worship and time for celebration to mark this accomplishment.

Immigration Terminology

Should We Use the Term “Illegal” as a Noun?



Adapted from the *National Association of Hispanic Journalists*, 2006

In the public sphere there are numerous terms used to describe immigrants, but it is important to think about the negative connotation these terms carry.

The use of the term “illegal” or “illegal immigrant” automatically criminalizes the person, instead of the action they are purported to have committed. Shortening the term in this way also stereotypes undocumented people who are in the United States as having committed a crime. Under current U.S. immigration law, being an undocumented immigrant is not a crime, it is a civil violation. Furthermore, an estimated 40 percent of all undocumented people living in the U.S. are visa overstayers, meaning they did not illegally cross the U.S. border.

In addition, it is degrading to use the terms “alien” and “illegal alien,” which describe undocumented immigrants as adverse, strange beings, inhuman outsiders who come to the U.S. with questionable motivations.

See www.nahj.org/nahjnews/articles/2006/March/immigrationcoverage.shtml



How Do We Refer to the “Stranger Among Us”?



Adapted from *Interfaith Worker Justice*, 2007

Throughout this handbook, different words are used to describe people who come to the U.S. from other countries. Words have political implications. Some we use interchangeably, some we stay away from. Here we look at their deeper meanings and purposes.

1. What is the distinction between “immigrant” and “migrant”? At times these words are used interchangeably. All immigrants are migrants—people who have left their homes and traveled to a new place. Immigrants have all crossed national borders, whereas migrants may move from one part of a country to another. The word immigration implies the intention of permanently settling in a new country.

2. How do we refer to the people who came to the United States surreptitiously or came holding temporary visas and stayed after their visas expired? We use several terms interchangeably in this primer. “Undocumented immigrants” refers to the roughly 12 million people, 7 million adults and 5 million children, who are in the U.S. without documents attesting that they are authorized to be here. “Undocumented workers” refers to the adults in this group who are in the workforce. “Unauthorized immigrants” or “unauthorized working adults” are synonymous terms to undocumented. So is the term “people without documents.” These are the preferred terms used in this handbook. They describe without judgment, and are used in respect, without inflaming passions.

“Illegal immigrants”, “illegal aliens”, and “unlawful workers” are widely used terms and appear frequently in legislation and newspaper accounts of immigration issues. Faith communities try to avoid any term that implies that a human being is illegal. While we recognize that many people have crossed our borders or overstayed their visas without legal authorization and have therefore violated immigration laws, they are human beings entitled to internationally acclaimed human rights, and they are not in and of themselves illegal.

See www.iwj.org/index.cfm/immigration

New Americans in the Tar Heel State

New Americans in the Tar Heel State: The Growing Economic and Political Clout of Immigrants and Latinos in North Carolina



Immigration Policy Center, 2009,
www.immigrationpolicy.org

Over the past two decades, North Carolina has experienced dramatic growth in its immigrant and Latino populations. Immigrants now account for 7% of North Carolina's population, and more than a quarter of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote. Latinos comprise 7.1% of the state's population and accounted for 3% of voters in the 2008 elections. The number of Latino voters in 2008 who were immigrants or the children of immigrants was nearly double the size of the very slim margin by which President Obama won the state. Immigrants and their children, especially those who naturalize, excel in school over time. Moreover, the revenue generated by Latino and Asian taxpayers, consumers, and entrepreneurs sustains thousands of jobs and contributes billions of dollars to the state's [economy]. At a time of deepening recession, North Carolina can ill-afford to alienate or marginalize such a fast-growing component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

Immigrants and Their Children Represent a Growing Share of North Carolina's Population:

- The foreign-born share of North Carolina's population rose from 1.7% in 1990, to 5.3% in 2000, to 7% in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- 28.9% of immigrants in North Carolina were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2007—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- 1.9% of registered voters in North Carolina were "New Americans"—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2006 Census Bureau data by Rob Paral & Associates.

Integrated Immigrants and their Children Excel in Education Over Time:

- In North Carolina, 36.5 % of foreign-born persons who were naturalized in 2007 had a bachelor's or higher degree compared to 20.6% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 18.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high school diploma compared to 43.2% of noncitizens.

- The number of immigrants in North Carolina with a college degree increased by 68.4% between 2000 and 2007, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.
- In North Carolina, 69.6% of all children in families that spoke a language other than English reported having oral English proficiency.

Latino and Immigrant Power at the Polls:

- The Latino share of North Carolina's population grew from 1.2% in 1990, to 4.7% in 2000, to 7.1% in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos comprised 3% of North Carolina voters in the 2008 elections, according to CNN exit polls.
- President Obama won by approximately 14,000 votes in North Carolina, yet received the votes of nearly 26,000 more Latino New Americans than McCain. The additional votes that Obama received from Latino New Americans who chose him over McCain was nearly double his margin of victory

Economic Impact of Latino Workers and Taxpayers:

- Latinos in North Carolina (56% of whom are foreign-born) contributed \$9.2 billion to the state's economy through their purchases and taxes in 2004, according to a 2006 study by researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- The impact of spending by North Carolina's Latinos in 2004 included 89,600 additional jobs, \$2.4 billion in additional labor income, \$455 million in extra state taxes, and \$661 million in extra federal taxes.
- In addition, Latinos in North Carolina directly contributed \$294 million in personal income taxes, property taxes, and small-business taxes.

Latinos and Asians as Consumers and Business Owners:

- In 2008, the purchasing power of Latinos in North Carolina totaled \$11.9 billion, while the purchasing power of Asians was \$5.9 billion. Between 1990 and 2008, the purchasing power of the state's Latinos increased 1,314%, and that of Asians 730%—both of which were the second highest growth rates of any state in the nation, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.
- North Carolina's 9,043 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.8 billion and provided jobs to 11,615 workers in 2002 (the last year for which data is available). The state's 13,695 Asian-owned firms had sales and receipts of \$3.5 billion and provided jobs to 32,759 workers, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Clarity in Numbers: Addressing Typical Concerns

Clarity in Numbers: Addressing typical concerns about immigration reform



By Jen Smyers, Church World Service, 2009

Statistics offer some of the most convincing evidence for both sides of the immigration debate. Unfortunately, statistics are often distorted to fit the biased agenda of restrictionist groups. This article addresses misconceptions concerning immigrants in the United States, in an effort to return clarity and accuracy to the immigration reform debate.

Assertion #1: *The 35.2 million immigrants* living in the United States is a record-breaking high, far surpassing the traditional flows of immigration during the “golden age of immigration” from 1925-1965.*^{1,2}

CLARIFICATION: This era is not historically known as a “golden age of immigration,” nor has there ever been a “traditional” rate of immigration – these dates have been cherry-picked to showcase the lowest immigration rates in American history. This was due to the Great Depression, World War II, and the highly restrictive and xenophobic National Origin Quota Acts of the 1920s, which restricted Chinese, Italian, and low-income immigrants and was repealed in 1965. Also, raw figures do not take into account the relative growth of immigration in the context of population growth. Percentages more accurately represent the impact of immigration. In 1910, at the height of the great wave of immigration, immigrants represented 14.7 percent of U.S. residents, making current immigration trends far from unusual.³ The immigrant population now accounts for 12.4 percent of the total U.S. population, compared with other traditional countries of immigration with higher percentages; Canada with 18 percent and Australia with 24 percent of their total populations.⁴

Assertion #2: *The growth of immigrant workers has depressed wages and harmed American workers. This reversed the tight labor market, which had converted low income families to middle class status.*⁵

CLARIFICATION: The overall economic impact of immigrants on native-born Americans remains ambiguous, as no consensus has been reached by researchers on the scale or direction of the impact. The economic effects of immigrants, whether positive or negative, should be considered as only one component of the immigration debate. That being said, new research shows that the skill sets of immigrant workers tend to complement, rather than compete with, those of native workers. As native workers are promoted to managerial and supervisory positions and earn higher wages, immigrant workers enter the labor market in lower level positions which fills job vacancies, strengthens the economy, and increases the production and efficiency of American business.⁶

Assertion #3: *While the average immigrant today is likely to be poor, uneducated and “ghettoized in ethnic enclaves,” immigrants during the 1925-65 era were educated and quickly earned high incomes.*

CLARIFICATION: It has become the trend to romanticize the achievements of European immigrants from the last great wave of immigration, though economic and educational success was not obtained until third- and fourth-generation immigrants. In the early Twentieth Century, European immigrants overall were paid lower wages than native-born Americans and were not accepted by mainstream society. In the 1950’s, second-generation European immigrants still occupied the majority of blue-collar jobs in New York City.⁷ Often overlooked, recent immigrants are integrating culturally and economically more so than at any other time in U.S. history. Today, three times as many immigrants are proficient in English compared to the percent of immigrants in 1890. In 1990, 29 percent of U.S. residents who spoke a language other than English at home reported to speak English “very well,” compared 44 percent in 2000.⁸ Conversational English proficiency averages more than 90 percent for foreign-born children who entered the country before they were ten years old.⁹ Also, immigrants who have been in the United States for more than ten years have significantly higher incomes than more recent arrivals. They tend to earn higher average wages than recent immigrants and established undocumented immigrants. This suggests that a path for legalization for immigrants would boost both wages and tax revenue.¹⁰

Addressing Typical Concerns (continued)

Assertion #4: *As the U.S. population increases, immigrants drain resources and exploit our tax system.*

CLARIFICATION: Immigrants contribute to the United States by paying taxes, working hard and enriching the U.S. economy. An increased rate of immigration is needed to guarantee the future welfare of baby boomers, who are beginning to exit the work force and receive their entitlements (social security and Medicare). Due to a steady decline in the native-born tax base, an increase in immigration is necessary to provide these revenues.¹¹ Moreover, high-skilled immigrants are an important asset to growing math- and science-based industries. One in every five doctors in the United States is an immigrant, as are two of every five medical scientists; one of every five computer specialists; and one of every six persons in engineering and science occupations. In the last three decades, the United States has attracted and absorbed more skilled workers than any other industrialized country. High skilled immigrants make the U.S. economy more diverse, productive and innovative.¹²

Assertion #5: *Although the United States' welfare rolls are already swollen, every year we import more people who end up on public assistance: immigrants.*¹³

CLARIFICATION: The 1996 welfare reform law limits immigrants' access to federal public assistance. New restrictions bar nearly all legal immigrants (with the exception of refugees and asylees) arriving after 1996 from receiving public assistance (Supplementary Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and Food Stamps) until

they have been in the United States for at least five years. Since 1996, use of public assistance among low-income immigrants has fallen. Use of TANF by immigrants dropped to 4.5 percent in 2004 from 19 percent in 1994. Similarly, use of Food Stamps dropped to 22 percent in 2004 from 35 percent in 1994, and SSI use to 4 percent from 5 percent. While Medicaid use rose among both immigrants and citizens, this was due to an overall decline in health insurance benefits to low-wage workers.¹⁴

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for any public assistance except medical emergencies. However, they contribute to government revenues through income tax, sales tax and social security tax. Many undocumented workers pay taxes using a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), which does not require legal status, and there is no reason to believe that the undocumented pay less sales tax than legal residents.¹⁵

**All references to "immigrants" refer to legal immigrants. References to undocumented immigrants have been noted as such.*



ENDNOTES: 1 "America's Immigration Tradition." Immigration Changes. Numbers USA. <<http://numbersusa.com/overpopulation/americasfuture/future4.html>> 2 Carmona, Steven A. "Immigrants at Mid-Decade: A Snapshot of America's Foreign Born Population in 2005." Center for Immigration Studies. December 2005. <<http://www.cis.org/articles/2005/back1405.html#18>> 3 United States. Department of Homeland Security. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2005. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2006. 4 International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2006 Edition. Paris: OECD, Table A.1.4 5 "Immigration Reform: Recognizing Reality or Surrendering Principles." Numbers USA. 19 February 2005. <<http://www.numbersusa.com/interests/CPAC2005speech.html>> 6 Peri, Giovanni. "How Immigrants Affect California Employment and Wages." California Counts: Population Trends and Profiles. Public Policy Institute of California. February of 2007. 7 Alba, Richard and Nancy Foner. "The Second Generation from the Last Great Wave of Immigration: Setting the Record Straight." Migration Policy Institute. October 2006. 8 Crawford, James. "Census 2000: A Guide for the Perplexed." <<http://ourworld.comuserve.com/homepages/jWCRAWFORD/census02.htm#1890>> 9 Hakimzadeh, Shirin. "The Pace and Flow of English Language Acquisition Among the U.S. Latino Population." Pew Hispanic Center. 10 Fix, Michael. "Immigrants' Costs and Contributions: The Effects of Reform." Migration Policy Institute. 26 July 2006 11 Rabin, Jeffrey L. "Immigrant Workers Could be Crucial to Ensuring the Security of Aging Baby Boomers." Los Angeles Times. 27 of February 2007. 12 Fix, Michael and Neeraj Kaushal. "The Contributions of High Skilled Immigrants." Migration Policy Institute. July 2006. 13 "Immigration and Welfare." Immigration and Society. Federation for American Immigration Reform. October 2002. <http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ii_c_immigrationissuecenters7fd8> 14 Fix 2006. 15 Camarota, Steve. The Center for Immigration Studies. As referenced in Lipman, Francine. "The Taxation of Undocumented Immigrants: Separate, Unequal, and Without Representation." Harvard Latino Law Review. 2006. (1-58).

Immigration By the Numbers

Monday Numbers

By Chris Fitzsimon, NC Policy Watch, 2010



10

100,000----number of immigrant parents of U.S. citizen children who have been deported from the United States in the last ten years. (*Facing our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement*, Urban Institute. January 2010.)

5.5 million---estimated number of children with undocumented parents in the United States (*Ibid*)

75---estimated percentage of those children who were born in the United States (*Ibid*)

11.9 million----number of undocumented immigrants in United States in 2008 (*Raising the Floor for American Workers : The Economic Benefits of Comprehensive Immigration Reform*. Center for American Progress and Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Council)

1.5 trillion---minimum amount in dollars of additional growth in national GDP from comprehensive immigration reform that provided path to eventual citizenship for undocumented workers (*Ibid*)

2.6 trillion---minimum amount in dollars in lost GDP over ten years if federal government implemented deportation only scenario, not including the actual costs of deportation or job loss (*Ibid*)

80 billion---amount in dollars that comprehensive immigration reform would add to the U.S. economy each year according to conservative Cato Institute. (*Restriction or Legalization?: Measuring the Economic Benefits of Immigration Reform*, Cato Institute, August 2009.)

641,130---number of foreign-born people in North Carolina in 2008 (*U.S. Census Bureau*)

350,000---number of undocumented residents in North Carolina in 2008 (*Pew Hispanic Center*)

75---estimated percentage of undocumented immigrants in United States who pay income and payroll taxes (*Immigrants in North Carolina: A Fact Sheet*,

UNC School of Government.)

7 billion---amount in dollars unauthorized immigrants contributed in 2002 taxes to Social Security and Medicare from which they cannot receive benefits. (*Center for Immigration Studies*)

7,024---amount in 2009 dollars of out-of-state tuition at North Carolina community colleges (*Report to N.C. Board of Community Colleges*, JBL Associates of Maryland, April 2009.)

5,375---amount in 2009 dollars of cost to educate a student at a North Carolina community college (*Ibid*)

111---number of documented students admitted to North Carolina community colleges in 2007-2008 (*N.C. Community College System*)

200,000---number of students who applied to North Carolina community colleges in 2007-2008. (*Ibid*)

0---number of North Carolina students who will be displaced by undocumented students who are allowed in enroll under policy approved by State Board of Community Colleges in September 2009.



Photo: José Galvez

Why Don't All Those Immigrants Just "Get Legal"?

Why Don't All Those Immigrants Just "Get Legal"?



By Sr. Attracta Kelly, NC Justice Center, 2008

Contrary to what seems to be a common misperception, an immigrant can acquire legal status in the United States in only a limited number of ways. This article provides a very basic overview of the major avenues. Readers should use it as a general guide. Those seeking legal advice on a specific situation should contact a qualified attorney.

The most common way for an immigrant to obtain legal status is through an application filed by a Family Member. The Family Member category is, in turn, divided into two general areas:

1. A current United States Citizen (USC) may apply for his/her spouse, children (under 21), and parents. This is called the Immediate Relative Category. Such applicants can acquire legal status relatively quickly (usually in as little as one year).
2. The second most common way for an immigrant to obtain legal status is through what's known as the Preference Category. A USC may also apply for his or her unmarried sons and daughters (21 and over). Processing usually takes about 6 years (unless the petitioner is from Mexico or the Philippines, in which case it takes about 15 years). A USC may apply for married sons and daughters, but processing takes about 8 years (18 years for petitioners from the Philippines and Mexico). A USC over 21 may apply for siblings with a waiting period of about 11 years (with Mexico, the waiting period is 14 and with the Philippines it's 22 years).

A Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) who has not yet become a naturalized citizen may apply for his or her spouse and children and for unmarried sons and daughters. The waiting periods to get legal status for applicants in this category range from six to twenty years, depending on the nature of the family relationship and the applicant's country of origin.

It's important to note that just because the spouse or parent has filed a petition for their family member in

this Preference Category, it does not give the family member any immediate legal right to live in the United States. Under the law, the family member must wait until the designated number of years has expired.

A second path to legal status involves a petition filed by an Employer for a necessary skilled worker. This process must first be approved by the United States Department of Labor after the employer has established that there is no citizen or legal permanent resident worker available to fill the particular position.

A third way for an immigrant to gain Legal Permanent Resident status is to first obtain refugee/asylum status. To qualify for asylum one must prove that he or she was the victim of persecution in his or her home country under one of the five protected areas (race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group, or political opinion). An applicant must apply within the year one enters the US. It is a very time-consuming process because one has to document all allegations of persecution. It is always difficult to find such documentation. Often, attorneys try to get it through State Department Reports and other international news sources, in affidavits from country experts and from whatever sources we can find to show that this particular individual was targeted and would most likely be targeted if he/she returned to the home country.

Finally, immigration law also allows a limited number of persons in very specific categories to "self-petition" – that is to apply for legal status on their own behalf. This includes: 1) certain specified groups of Salvadorans and Guatemalans, 2) persons afforded protection under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), 3) a category known as "Special Immigrant Juveniles" (these are children who have been neglected, abused or abandoned by their parents), 4) victims of human trafficking and 5) certain victims of other crimes.

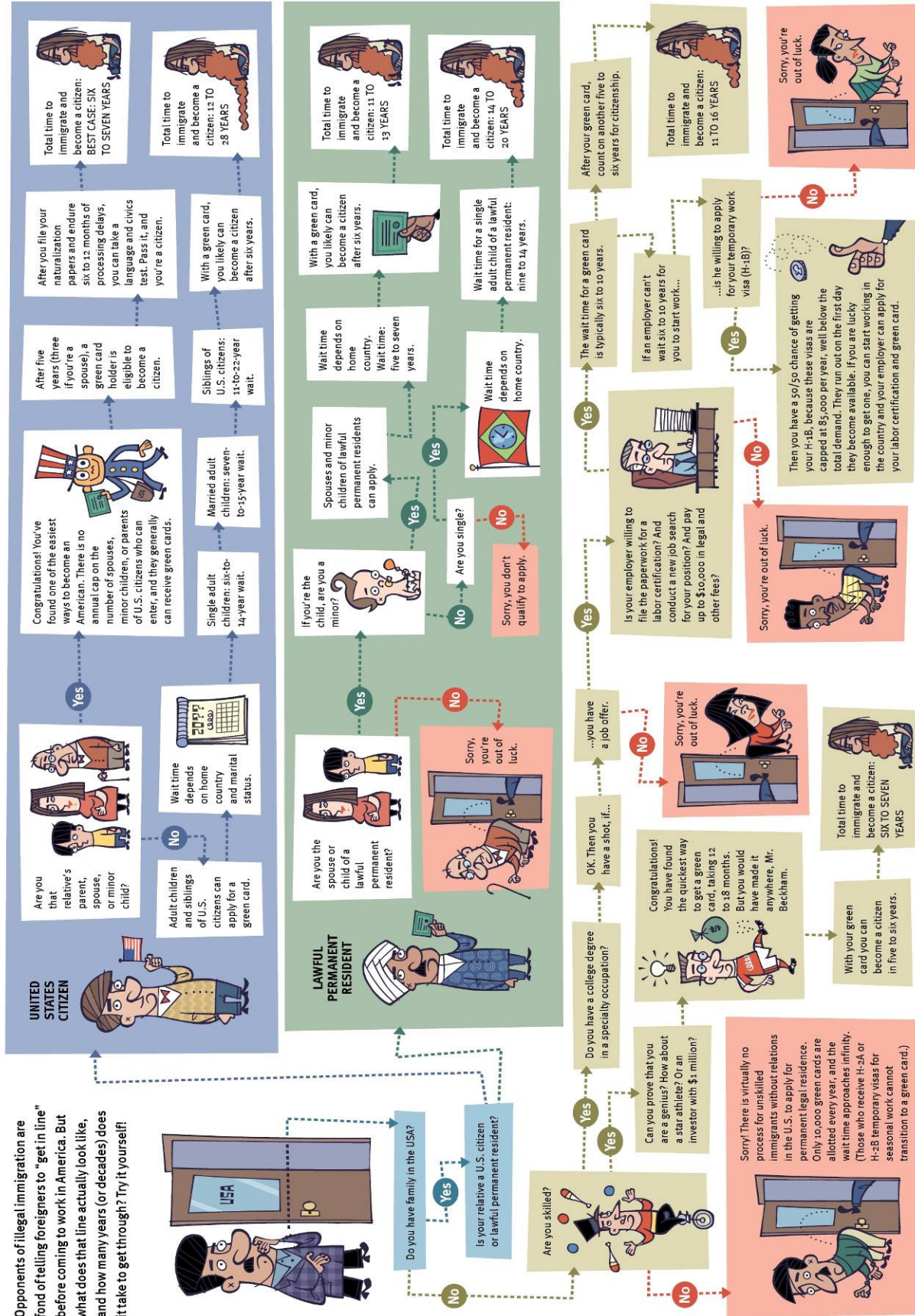
Other than the ways mentioned in this article, it is currently almost impossible for an immigrant to attain legal status in the US. And as noted above, even for those who may be able to attain legal status, the waiting period is often measured in decades, not in months or years.

What Part of Legal Immigration Don't You Understand?

Mike Flynn and Shikha Dalmia

Illustrated by Terry Colon

Opponents of illegal immigration are fond of telling foreigners to "get in line" before coming to work in America. But what does that line actually look like, and how many years (or decades) does it take to get through? Try it yourself!



(Flynn is director of government affairs and Dalmia is a senior-policy analyst at Reason Foundation. This chart was developed by Reason Foundation in collaboration with the National Foundation for American Policy.)

The Economics of Immigration

The Economics of Immigration

By Andrew Brod



This article first appeared in the Greensboro News & Record, May 28, 2006. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author.

America has a conflicted attitude toward immigration. Of course we're a nation of immigrants. Yet once one wave of immigrants is established here, it's often suspicious of the next.

Perhaps because of this, immigration policy has been something of a backwater in American politics. To be sure, some critics have long seen the relative ease of entry into the U.S. as evidence of a fundamental weakness of both American policy and will. But rarely has immigration dominated public discourse as it has recently.

The current immigration debate is mostly about legality and fairness, not economics. Some commentators emphasize that any illegal immigrant is by definition a law-breaker. Others claim that previous immigrants played by the rules and applied for citizenship, and they demand the same of current immigrants. President George W. Bush's plan to provide illegal immigrants with a path toward citizenship has been met by vehement opposition, mostly from his own party, which damns it as an amnesty program and hence inherently unfair.

But there are also economic aspects to the debate, centered upon the claim that immigrants drive down wages in this country. The claim has been repeated so often that it's accepted as fact. But is it? Let's take a look at this claim as well as some others that constitute the economics of immigration.

DEMAND-SIDE ECONOMICS

When people assert that immigration depresses wages, they have in mind a supply-side effect: An influx of people increases the supply of labor, which exerts downward pressure on wages. But what these people ignore is that there's also a demand-side effect. The influx also increases the demand for labor, as immigrants engage in retail activity just like the rest of us. More spending on products and services means that more people are needed to build

stores, give haircuts, change motor oil, and so on. The resulting increase in the demand for labor exerts an upward pressure on wages.

Therefore, because immigration has a demand-side effect as well as a supply-side effect on the labor market, it simultaneously depresses and inflates wages. Which effect wins? Economic theory can't tell us, but economic data can. There is an extensive literature of empirical research that suggests that the two effects roughly cancel each other out in the short run (positive effects are more likely in the long run). For example, a well-known study of the 1980 Mariel boatlift of Cuban refugees into Miami found essentially no effect on wages. In broad outlines, immigration appears to increase labor demand by about as much as labor supply.

To be sure, there is some evidence of small negative effects for low-skill workers, and that should be a concern for policy-makers. But in some places the effect of immigration on wages has been positive. A University of Nebraska study describes a county in which the Latino population increased ten-fold during the 1990s. The study shows that instead of decreasing wages, immigration revived the local economy and significantly increased local wages.

CLASS WAR?

A study by two Harvard economists finds that immigration from Mexico "has played a modest role in the widening of the U.S. wage structure by adversely affecting the wages of less-educated native workers and improving the earnings of college graduates." The first thing to note here is that once again, the wage effect is modest. The second thing to note is that while immigration depresses low-skill native wages by a small amount, it inflates the wages of better-educated natives by approximately the same amount. Therefore, immigration is good for rich people, but only slightly.

THEY HAVE SKILLS

An analysis by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics confirms the conventional wisdom that low educational attainment is more common among foreign-born workers than among native-born workers. Foreign-born workers are approximately evenly distributed among low-skill, mid-skill, and highly skilled workers, whereas relatively few native-born workers fall into the low-skill category. But

The Economics of Immigration (continued)

highly skilled workers are equally common in the two groups: just under a third of each group are college graduates. So while the conventional wisdom is correct to a degree, foreign-born and native-born workers are equally well prepared for the New Economy.

STATE BUDGET IMPACTS

Do illegal immigrants place an inordinate burden on state and local governments? After all, immigration is governed by federal policy but its effects are often felt locally, as immigrant children attend public schools and immigrant households avail themselves of social services.

A recent University of Florida study found that when compared to native households in the state, immigrant households pay less in sales and property tax and receive more in services. They pay less federal income tax than native households, but they pay about the same payroll taxes and they receive substantially less Social Security. All told, the state and local fiscal burden in Florida is nearly \$2,000 per immigrant household per year. Therefore, the net cost of providing services to immigrants is about \$360 per native household. Florida has a high proportion of immigrants, which tends to raise the average burden on native households. The national average is closer to \$240 per year.

The Florida study has been cited widely as support for restricting immigration, but the authors warn specifically against that: “We do not conclude from our findings that the state should either discourage immigration or limit services to non-native residents. Even from a narrow, budgetary perspective, most immigrant households are net contributors. Our point is simply that Florida’s state and local governments need to account for the effect of immigration *in their budget planning*” (italics in the original).

A study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill focused on Latino immigrants and calculated a smaller fiscal burden. Latino immigrants in North Carolina contribute an additional \$756 million per year in state taxes but cost the state \$817 million. The net burden on the state budget is \$61 million per year, or \$102 per Latino resident.

Now, of course not all segments of the native community contribute more in taxes than they receive in services. And the UNC-CH report noted the extensive economic impacts of Latino immigrants in North Carolina: a consumer spending impact of over \$9 billion per year and spin-off employment of nearly 90,000 jobs. It’s

very likely that immigration into North Carolina has softened the blow of the textile industry’s decline.

JUST SAY NO?

Most of the debate over federal immigration policy has been about hardening the borders, primarily with Mexico. [President Bush] wants to dispatch National Guard units to that border and he wants a large increase in the number of Border Patrol agents. Nearly lost in the debate is the role of economic incentives in hiring illegal immigrants. If the “war on drugs” has taught us anything, it’s that none of these other proposals will work unless employers face a strong disincentive to hire undocumented labor.

Economic theory implies that the disincentive can be summarized by the expected value of the fine, which is the probability of being fined times the dollar amount of the fine. Increasing either number—the fine or the chance of getting caught—will discourage the hiring of undocumented workers. And yet the federal government has decreased the number of worksite inspectors and along with it the probability that a given business will be fined. In 1999 the government fined 417 businesses for hiring illegal immigrants; in 2004 the figure had fallen to three.

No doubt the president’s supporters in the business community aren’t thrilled by calls for more worksite inspections and more stringent enforcement of current laws. Neither are some immigrants’ advocacy groups. But a balanced approach to immigration policy would combine vigilance on our borders with sensible policies that address the economic incentives of employers.

The strong emotions in the immigration debate are less about economics and more about ethical concerns regarding fairness and the rule of law. Immigration overall has enriched the American economy, and fortunately few voices on either side of the debate have claimed otherwise. However, there is an economic risk of letting strong emotions take over the debate. Overly tough policies could discourage the highly skilled immigrants who have helped keep the U.S. innovative and competitive. We may have already shot ourself in the foot by clamping down hard on visits by foreign-born students and researchers in the wake of 9/11. The American economy is wonderfully resilient, but let’s not further undermine it with a macho immigration policy.

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Undocumented Immigrants as Taxpayers

Undocumented Immigrants as Taxpayers



AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

By the Immigration Policy Center, 2007
www.immigrationpolicy.org

"In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes."
-Benjamin Franklin

As the debate over illegal immigration expands, some make the claim that unauthorized immigrants do not pay taxes and rely heavily on government benefits. Neither is borne out by the facts. Undocumented men have work force participation rates that are higher than other cohorts of workers, and all undocumented are ineligible for most government services, but pay taxes as workers, consumers, and residents.¹

Like The Rest of Us, Undocumented Immigrants Pay Taxes

Undocumented immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy not only through the labor they provide, but through the taxes they pay. Between one-half and three-quarters of undocumented immigrants pay federal and state income taxes, Social Security taxes, and Medicare taxes. And all undocumented immigrants pay sales taxes (when they buy anything at a store, for instance) and property taxes (even if they rent housing).²

According to the 2005 Economic Report of the President, undocumented immigrants working "on the books"...contribute to the tax rolls but are ineligible for almost all Federal public assistance programs and most major Federal-state programs."³ The report also notes that immigrants in general "contribute money to public coffers by paying sales and property taxes (the latter are implicit in apartment rents)."⁴

The Undocumented and Social Security: Contributing Yes, Collecting No

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has concluded that undocumented immigrants "account for a major portion" of the billions of dollars paid into the Social Security system under names or social security numbers that don't match SSA records and

which payees therefore can never draw upon.⁵ As of October 2005, these payments—which are tracked through the SSA's Earnings Suspense File (ESF)—totaled \$520 billion.⁶

Even at the State Level, Undocumented Immigrants Still Pay More in Taxes Than They Use in Services

A 2006 study by the Texas State Comptroller found that "the absence of the estimated 1.4 million undocumented immigrants in Texas in fiscal 2005 would have been a loss to our gross state product of \$17.7 billion. Undocumented immigrants produced \$1.58 billion in state revenues, which exceeded the \$1.16 billion in state services they received."⁷

Similarly, a 2007 study by the Oregon Center for Public Policy estimated that undocumented immigrants in Oregon pay state income, excise, and property taxes, as well as federal Social Security and Medicare taxes, which "total about \$134 million to \$187 million annually." In addition, "taxes paid by Oregon employers on behalf of undocumented workers total about \$97 million to \$136 million annually." As the report goes on to note, undocumented workers are ineligible for the Oregon Health Plan, food stamps, and temporary cash assistance.⁸

Likewise, a 2007 report from the Iowa Policy Project concluded that "undocumented immigrants pay an estimated aggregate amount of \$40 million to \$62 million in state taxes each year." Moreover, "undocumented immigrants working on the books in Iowa and their employers also contribute annually an estimated \$50 million to \$77.8 million in federal Social Security and Medicare taxes from which they will never benefit. Rather than draining state resources, undocumented immigrants are in some cases *subsidizing* services that only documented residents can access."⁹



Undocumented Immigrants as Taxpayers (continued)

Spending Begets More Spending and a Stronger Economy

The consumer purchasing power of undocumented immigrants—what they spend on goods, services, and housing—not only creates new jobs, but also provides federal, state, and local governments with additional revenue through sales, income, business, and property taxes. In other words, spending by undocumented immigrants has an economic “multiplier effect.” For instance, a 2002 study by the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Chicago found that undocumented immigrants in the Chicago metropolitan area alone spent \$2.89 billion in 2001. These expenditures stimulated “an additional \$2.56 billion in local spending,” for a total of \$5.45 billion in additional spending, or 1.5% of the Gross Regional Product. This spending, in turn, sustained 31,908 jobs in the local economy.¹⁰



Photo: SAF



Photo: José Galvvez

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U.S.-Mexico Trade and Migration

U.S.-Mexico Trade and Migration



Global Exchange, 2007

Today, Mexico is the country with the largest international migrant population in the world. The Mexican authorities estimate that over 11 million Mexicans, or 11 percent of the total population, reside outside the country.¹

One of the main promises of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was that it would create enough jobs to prevent Mexicans from seeking work across the border. However, between 1994 and 2004, 450,000 Mexicans have crossed the border into the U.S., without authorization, every year, on average. The total, annual number of immigrants from Mexico grew by 65 percent, compared to the previous decade. Undocumented arrivals, increasing 160 percent decade on decade, have far surpassed the number of documented arrivals, which have declined 38 percent over the same period.²

NAFTA's defenders argue that the trade agreement has been good for Mexico by citing Mexico's average annual GDP growth of 3 percent since the agreement passed. This compares favorably to the 2.2 percent average growth during the "lost decade" of 1981 to 1993, but it is dismal compared to the average annual growth of the previous twenty years (1961-1980), 6.73 percent.³

In per capita terms, Mexico's GDP grew by an annual average of 1.69 percent between 1994 and 2006. Again, compared to the statistic for the "lost decade" or "transition-to-an-open-market economy" period of 1981 to 1993, 0.15 percent, this looks positive. However, from 1960 to 1980, Mexico's per capita GDP grew by 3.56 percent yearly, on average.⁴ This last figure represents a doubling of per capita GDP, even as Mexico's population doubled during the period. Mexico would be very close to European living standards today had it continued its previous rate of growth.

According to the Woodrow Wilson Institute, "Declining opportunities in rural Mexico have spurred migration to the United States."

Although the Mexican rural population makes up only 25% of the total population, it contributes to 44 percent of all migrants to the U.S.⁵

Economic decline under NAFTA has led to unprecedented levels of income inequality in Mexico. Today, the richest 10 percent of Mexico's population makes 25 times what the poorest 10 percent make, and the country's income inequality index remains among the highest in the world.⁶ A 2006 comprehensive study found that inflation-adjusted wages for virtually every category of Mexican worker decreased over NAFTA's first six years. The workers that experienced the highest losses of real earnings were employed women with basic education (-16.1 percent) and employed men with advanced education (-15.6 percent).

Mexican government data show that the elimination of food security policies under NAFTA led to over 1.3 million Mexican peasant farmers losing their livelihoods as subsidized U.S. food imports flooded the market.⁷ While the price paid to Mexican corn farmers fell by about half following NAFTA, the price of tortillas has shot up 738 percent⁸ – in sharp contrast to promises by NAFTA's boosters that Mexican consumers would benefit from the pact.

Trade liberalization has reduced living standards for the Mexican poor since the 1980s. Today the minimum wage in Mexico buys only one third of what it was able to buy in 1982.⁹

Prior to NAFTA, 36 percent of Mexico's rural population earned less than the minimum wage needed to purchase food, a number that grew by nearly 50 percent in the agreement's first four years. Today, the percentage of the Mexican population in this state of poverty remains roughly where it was before NAFTA, despite the promises made by the pact's proponents.¹⁰ According to the Washington Post story on the 10-year anniversary of NAFTA, "19 million more Mexicans are living in poverty than 20 years ago, according to the Mexican government and international organizations. About 24 million – nearly one in every four Mexicans – are classified as extremely poor and unable to afford adequate food."¹¹

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NAFTA's Vicious Cycle

1) Increased U.S. Corn Exports: During NAFTA's first seven years, U.S. corn exports to Mexico increased an outstanding eighteenfold. On the surface, this sounds like good news for U.S. farmers and for Mexicans looking for lower prices on their staple food. The reality is more complicated.

2) Farmers Uprooted: Thousands of Mexican peasants, stripped of subsidies and unable to compete with U.S. producers, have been driven from their land. Once able to feed their own families, they must now obtain cash to buy food, despite limited income opportunities.

3) Poverty Increase: The World Bank reports that 82% of rural Mexicans were living in poverty in 1998, up from 79% in 1994.

4) Immigration: Uprooted Mexican farmers have contributed to increased immigration flows to the U.S. According to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, "In one of free trade's brutal ironies, many of these Mexican trade policy refugees are joining the swelling flow of immigrants who are harvesting and processing U.S. food in often dangerous and low-wage conditions."

7) U.S. Agribusiness: The corporations that helped pressure Mexico to allow duty-free U.S. corn imports under NAFTA have done very well. Cargill, the world's largest grain trader and the top-ranked private U.S. company had net earnings in 1999 of \$597 million, up from \$350 million in 1992.

6) U.S. Farmers: In 2000, the price of corn sank to the lowest level in a quarter century - \$1.80 per bushel compared to \$5 as recently as 1995. Although, the U.S. Congress passed a farm bill in 2002 that provides billions in subsidies, most go to large corporate farms, while family farmers continue to decline.

5) Border Patrol: U.S. spending on immigration controls skyrocketed from \$967 million in 1993 to \$2.56 billion in 1999. The number of border patrol agents double to more than 9,000. In 1999, 356 migrants died in desperate attempts to elude the patrol while crossing the border.

Health Care: Sharing the Costs, Sharing the Benefits

Sharing the Costs, Sharing the Benefits: Inclusion is the Best Medicine



AMERICAN IMMIGRATION FOUNDRY

By the Immigration Policy Center, 2009
www.immigrationpolicy.org

As policymakers debate the scope and form of the health care reform package now taking shape in Congress, it is important to understand the role of immigrant participation in the current health care system. Misconceptions about immigrants and their participation in our health care system abound, the facts demonstrate that immigrants can and should contribute to any new program. It is both good policy and common sense to treat access to health insurance for all as an investment in the nation's public health. Categorical exclusions of any kind—whether of immigrants, redheads, or cat owners—are a mistake. It makes more sense to allow everyone to buy affordable health care.

Millions of immigrants want the opportunity to purchase affordable health insurance so they can stay healthy, work, and care for their families. Allowing millions of immigrants to purchase affordable health care will result in the payment of billions of dollars in insurance premiums, helping to pay the cost of health reform in America.

The more people who pay into a system of health insurance, the more everyone benefits.

- An important function of health insurance is to pool risks and use premiums collected from the healthy to pay for the medical care of those who need it.
- It is common sense that the more people who pay into the health care system, the more the risk—and thus the costs—are spread out over the entire population.
- Access to health care, particularly preventive care services, not only improves public health, but is also a cost savings to the system. The Center for Science in the Public Interest concluded that comprehensive prevention programs are the most economical way to maximize health and minimize health care costs.

As the U.S. population ages, more will be spent on health care for the elderly. The more people paying into the system, the more those costs are spread out.

- Approximately 1 in 5 Americans is age 60 or older. The elderly account for a large and growing share of U.S. tax spending. In 1980, spending on the elderly was nearly one-third of the federal budget. It is projected that, in 2015, spending on the elderly will be nearly half of the entire federal budget. Considerably more is spent on the elderly than on children.

- According to demographer Dowell Myers, the ratio of seniors (age 65 and older) to working-age adults (25-64) will increase by 67% between 2010 and 2030, precipitating fiscal crises in the Social Security and Medicare systems.

- The cost of Medicaid and Medicare could be as much as \$1.2 trillion per year by 2015. Having more, healthy, working-age people paying into the system will help prevent these crises.

U.S. citizens make up the majority of those who are uninsured.

- U.S. citizens make up the majority of the uninsured (78%), while legal and undocumented immigrants account for 22% of the nonelderly uninsured.

- The majority of the growth in the number of uninsured individuals between 2000 and 2006 consisted of U.S. citizens. Citizens made up approximately 80% of the increase, while noncitizens accounted for approximately 20%.

Non-citizens are a vast untapped network of new subscribers.

- Because they are often employed in low-wage jobs without access to employer-based insurance coverage, noncitizens are far less likely than citizens to have health insurance, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Approximately 47% of noncitizens lack insurance, compared to 15% of U.S. citizens. Undocumented immigrants are the least likely to be insured.

Sharing the Costs, Sharing the Benefits (continued)

As a rule, immigrants incur less health care costs than native-born Americans.

- Immigrants tend to be younger than the rest of the American population. They arrive in the United States during their prime working years, and tend to be healthier than the aging U.S. population.

- According to a July 2009 article in the *American Journal of Public Health*, immigrants are much less likely than U.S.-born adults to report being in fair or poor health. They are less likely to have chronic health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, coronary heart disease, hypertension, or emphysema or to have an activity limitation. Recent immigrants appear to be healthier than established immigrants, who are healthier than U.S.-born citizens.

- According to the non-partisan Kaiser Commission, noncitizens have poorer access to care and receive less primary health care than U.S. citizens, but they are less likely than citizens to use the emergency room. In 2006, 20% of U.S.-citizen adults and 22% of U.S.-citizen children had visited the emergency room within the past year. In contrast, 13% of noncitizen adults and 12% of noncitizen children had used emergency room care. Despite the myths, immigrants use less health care, including less emergency room care, compared to U.S. citizens.

- A 2006 study in *Health Affairs* found that communities with high rates of emergency room usage tend to have relatively small noncitizen populations. Cities with large immigrant populations (such as Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Phoenix, Arizona) have much lower rates of emergency room use than areas with small immigrant populations (such as Cleveland).

- According to a July 2009 study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, immigrants use less medical care, and less expensive care, even when they have health insurance. Immigrants' per-person medical expenditures were one-half to two-thirds less than U.S.-born citizens with similar characteristics.

- The study also found that immigrants do not impose a disproportionate financial burden on the U.S. health care system. Health care costs for the average immigrant in America are 55% lower than health care costs for the average U.S.-born person.

Another study found that, in 2005, average annual per capita health care expenditures for noncitizens were \$1,797—versus \$3,702 for U.S. citizens.

- Recent immigrants were responsible for 1.4% of total public medical expenditures for adults in 2003, even though they constituted 5% of the population.

INCLUSION IS THE BEST MEDICINE

When health care costs are distributed across a broader pool of people, the overall costs for everyone goes down. Inclusion of legal immigrants, who are generally younger and healthier than U.S. citizens, can have a positive effect on overall costs because it will encourage more preventive care and add additional payments to the system. Moreover, including immigrants in the health care system not only strengthens the system by adding their payments, but is a critical part of their integration into U.S. society. In addition to working, paying taxes, and learning English, immigrants want to pay their fair share for health care, just like all Americans.



Dangerous Merger: Local Enforcement

Dangerous merger:

Corrupting the criminal justice system for immigration enforcement

Why pouring billions of dollars into CAP, 287(g), and Secure Communities subverts the criminal justice system, erodes due process, and makes us less safe

Questions and Answers:

What is the connection between immigration enforcement and the criminal justice system?

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with deporting and detaining immigrants, uses local law enforcement and jails in its enforcement operations. The ICE ACCESS initiative combines 13 programs with the goal of using local criminal justice systems—the courts, jails, and police—to hunt down people deemed to be “criminal aliens.”¹ The “Criminal Alien” Program (CAP), 287(g) Agreements, and the Secure Communities initiatives are the three most well-known ACCESS programs used to accomplish this goal.² ICE spent over \$1 billion on these programs in FY 2009.³ FY 2010 funding is projected to be nearly \$1.5 billion.

The alleged target: “criminal aliens” who commit serious offenses

- The term “criminal alien” is used to describe any noncitizen who has been arrested or convicted for any criminal offense, regardless of the severity of the person’s crime or whether they are undocumented or have lawful immigration status. Under current laws and practices, ICE is classifying increasingly alarming numbers of noncitizens as “criminal aliens.” This “criminal alien” dragnet is being used to indiscriminately target, apprehend and deport ever larger numbers of noncitizens, including long-time green card holders with U.S. citizen spouses and children. Since Fall 2006, ICE has identified and charged over 450,000 non citizens through CAP, with increasingly more immigrants charged each year.⁴
- While ICE claims to target serious criminals, the Government Accountability Office in the March 2009 review of the 287(g) program found that ICE failed to meet this goal, and was aggressively focusing on “easier” targets—those who commit minor offenses, like shoplifting or minor violations of law such as traffic violations.⁵

How do these programs refer immigrants in the criminal justice system to ICE?

Local police and jails collect immigration information on all people arrested (e.g. booking or at arrest), share this information with ICE, and allow ICE to interrogate defendants in jail. Or, ICE encourages local law enforcement officials to use integrated criminal/immigration databases or ICE fingerprint checks. A “detainer” or an immigration “hold” is placed on those in custody, preventing their release from jail and

I.C.E.

287 (g):

ICE contracts with state and local police and jail officials to enforce immigration laws



Secure Communities:

Uses technology and databases to identify, detain, and deport “criminal aliens” in federal, state and local facilities



“Criminal Alien” Program:

Relies on jail officials, police, and the courts to identify “criminal aliens” incarcerated within federal, state and local facilities



Detainer damage: a misused and mishandled tool

- The immigration “detainer” is the key tool used by ICE to apprehend noncitizens in the criminal justice system. When booked into jail, noncitizens unknowingly respond to questions about where they were born. The jail then provides this information to ICE who then files a detainer on the person. The detainer permits the jail to detain the immigrant beyond their criminal case so that ICE can pick them up for deportation. In Irving, TX, 60% of people who had detainers placed on them were arrested for low level infractions such as speeding, public intoxication, misdemeanor assault and writing bad checks.⁶
- Under law, the detainer only permits a jail to hold the person for a 48 hour period. However, noncitizens frequently remain in jail beyond the 48 hour limit. ICE does not provide proper guidance to jail officials on detainer authority, including the 48 hour limitation or how to lift the detainer when it is erroneously placed on U.S. citizens. ICE detainers mean that noncitizen defendants are being held in jail for much longer periods than noncitizens. For example, in Travis County, TX, the average length of stay for U.S. citizen inmates on the lowest level misdemeanor charges was seven days; for this same group of noncitizen defendants, the average length of stay was *fifty* days.⁷

ensuring that they will only be released to ICE custody. Any suspicion of noncitizen status means the person gets referred to ICE for deportation.

How effective are these programs?

There are no government regulations or any other procedural mechanisms in place to ensure effective oversight, accountability and redress.

Continued on reverse...

Dangerous Merger: Local Enforcement (continued)

...continued from previous page

Dangerous merger: Corrupting the criminal justice system for immigration enforcement

While rounding up “criminal aliens” sounds good, these programs actually subvert the criminal justice system, erode due process, and make us less safe

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There is no immigrant crime wave

Despite rhetoric that the “criminal alien” population is on the rise, studies show that immigrants commit fewer crimes than native-born citizens, and that a high proportion of immigrants in a neighborhood is associated with lower rates of crime.⁸ A California study, a state with more immigrants than any other, concluded the foreign-born are incarcerated at a rate half as high as their presence in the population.⁹ According to the latest Justice Department statistics available, noncitizen prisoners accounted for only 5.9% of the combined **federal and state** prisoner population.¹⁰

Shifts Scarce Resources Away From Prosecuting True Criminals and Jeopardizes Effective Law Enforcement

Instead of fighting crime, it is now common practice for many police departments to target immigrants for arrests on minor violations that result in their deportation by ICE. Police chiefs and scholars worry that political pressure to divert law enforcement to immigration enforcement will sabotage “sound and well established policing practices.”¹¹ In Maricopa County, Arizona, where Sheriff Arpaio has shifted law enforcement resources to illegal immigration, FBI statistics show that violent crime has increased by 69%, murder is up 166%, robbery is up 74%; property Crime is up 26%; burglary is up 25%.

Fosters bias against immigrants in our criminal justice system

Misguided policies against suspected immigrants, legal or undocumented, by judges and our criminal court systems are on the rise. Treating immigrants differently than U.S. citizens in our criminal justice system subverts the core purpose of our legal system to enforce equal treatment of the law. In Harris County, TX, the district attorney who has vowed to fight illegal immigration, proposed to bar plea deals for people who refuse to provide citizenship information, in violation of state law. State legislatures and judges are abandoning time-tested bail provisions to create blanket no-bail policies for noncitizens with detainers—regardless of the severity of the crime—even though there is “no conclusive research to show that illegal immigrants are more likely than their U.S.-citizens to abscond on state charges while out on bail.”¹²

Violates the basic promises of fairness and due process at the core of our legal system

Long ago the U.S. Supreme Court held that our Constitution requires that people accused of a crime be given the right to remain silent and the right to have a court-appointed attorney to defend these and other due process rights. Under immigration law, immigrants have far fewer due process rights, including no right to an attorney until after they have incriminated themselves, and no right to an appointed attorney ever. Arresting immigrants, locking them up in jail, interrogating them without lawyers, and then using this information to deport them, prosecute them, and jail them is un-American.

The North Carolina case: How 287(g) Increased Racial Profiling

- With eight active 287(g) agreements, North Carolina has become a national testing ground for programs between ICE and local enforcement. Local police set up roadblocks for the purpose of checking licenses outside of Latino markets on the weekends and on Sundays, they station themselves at roads that provide access to Latino churches.¹³ Johnson County Sheriff Steve Bizzell has stated that “they [immigrants] are breeding like rabbits,” and that they “rape, rob and murder American citizens.”¹⁴ Despite this attempt to link immigrants to violent crime, in one North Carolina county, 83% of immigrants arrested in one month by ICE-authorized police officers were charged with traffic violations.¹⁵ Still, criminal alien programs do not require data collection on race or ethnicity to verify that racial profiling does not exist.



The Immigrant Justice Network is a collaborative formed in 2006 with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers' Guild, and the Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project to advocate on behalf of noncitizens facing unjust immigration penalties as a result of being entangled with the criminal justice system.



Footnote citations can be found on:
<http://www.immigrantjusticenetwork.org>

Questions about “Secure Communities”

More Questions Than Answers about the Secure Communities Program



By the National Immigration Law Center, 2009
www.nilc.org

In March 2008, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced the initiation of the Secure Communities program.¹ The critical element of the program (now called Secure Communities: A Comprehensive Plan to Identify and Remove Criminal Aliens) is that, during booking in a jail, arrestees' fingerprints will be checked against U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) databases, rather than just against FBI criminal databases. ICE will automatically be notified if the fingerprints match fingerprints in the DHS system. It will then do follow-up interviews and “take appropriate action.”²

ICE implementation of the program began in October 2008 in North Carolina and Texas. The agency expects it to be fully implemented in all jails and prisons throughout the country within the next four years.³

Secure Communities is just one of the programs included under Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security (ICE ACCESS), which ICE describes as an “umbrella of services and programs” that “provide local law enforcement agencies an opportunity to team with ICE to combat specific challenges in their communities.”⁴ One of the other ICE ACCESS programs is cross-designation of state and local law enforcement officers to enforce immigration law under section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).⁵

Secure Communities has a deceptively benign appearance because of its name and purported focus on criminals. But the program applies to immigrants regardless of guilt or innocence, how or why they were arrested, and whether or not their arrests were based on racial or ethnic profiling or were just a pretext for checking immigration status. ICE fact sheets and press releases leave many critical questions unanswered: How will ICE ensure that the program's priorities — giving highest priority to persons convicted of serious crimes — are

implemented and enforced? What auditing and oversight will be conducted? How will racial and ethnic profiling be prevented? How will the civil rights of targeted persons be protected? What redress exists for those wrongly identified? When will detainers be imposed and how will abuses be prevented? What will be the effects on community policing, and the willingness of victims and witnesses to report crime?

The following questions and answers take a look at these issues.

Has ICE issued regulations governing implementation of the program?

- No. The program's operation has been announced by press releases and fact sheets posted on the ICE website, but no regulations have been issued, even though the program has been put into operation.

What is the relationship between Secure Communities and the 287(g) program?

- They are separate but related and sometimes overlapping programs.
- Section 287(g) is a provision of the INA that permits police to enforce civil immigration law provisions after their jurisdiction enters into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with DHS. It requires training and certification of local law enforcement participants, and their immigration enforcement activities must be conducted under the supervision of ICE agents. Section 287(g) has existed since 1996, but was unused until 2002, when Florida entered into the first agreement. ICE has reported that as of November 2008, 67 jurisdictions had entered into MOAs and 950 officers had been trained.⁶
- ICE has included the section 287(g) program as one of the components of Secure Communities, to “increase local law enforcement partnerships through 287(g) cross-designation that allows trained officers to interview and initiate removal proceedings of aliens processed through their detention facilities.”⁷
- It is conceivable that a community would have both a 287(g) program based either in or outside a jail, as well as access to DHS databases in a jail through Secure Communities. If the 287(g) program is in a jail, then jail officers might be the

Questions about “Secure Communities” (continued)

ICE officers who “conduct follow-up interviews and take appropriate action.” The ICE fact sheets and press releases do not clarify whether this is the case.

What are ICE’s priorities for the Secure Communities program?

- ICE reports that under the program’s “risk-based” approach, it will use the following three levels to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated to identify and determine the immigration status of non-U.S. citizens arrested for crime who pose the greatest risk to the public:
- Level 1 – Individuals who have been *convicted* of major drug offenses and violent offenses, such as murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and kidnapping;
- Level 2 – Individuals who have been *convicted* of minor drug offenses and mainly property offenses, such as burglary, larceny, fraud, and money laundering; and
- Level 3 – Individuals who have been *convicted* of other offenses.⁸

According to ICE, Level 1 offenses will be the “top priority.”⁹

How will DHS ensure that it goes after Level 1 persons who have been convicted of Level 1 major drug and violent crimes, not simply arrested for Level 3 minor offenses?

- ICE fact sheets and press releases say nothing about this.

What is ICE’s track record for focusing enforcement on violent criminals who pose a threat to the community?

- Although ICE claims that it is focusing enforcement efforts on violent criminals, it has done a bad job of focusing enforcement on the “worst of the worst.” In fact, analyses of the National Fugitive Operations Program (NFOP), which is meant to improve national security by locating and removing dangerous fugitives, and of the 287(g) program have found that these programs largely target those accused of immigration status violations and traffic offenses. For example:
- According to a recent Migration Policy Institute report, NFOP “has failed to focus its resources on

the priorities Congress intended when it authorized the program. In effect, NFOP has succeeded in apprehending the easiest targets, not the most dangerous fugitives. Furthermore, the program’s structure and design appear to encourage officers to jeopardize their own safety, alienate communities, and misdirect expensive personnel resources.”¹⁰

- According to a recent report by the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina Legal Foundation and the Immigration and Human Rights Clinic of at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, police use agreements under INA section 287(g) to “purge towns and cities of ‘unwelcome’ immigrants.”¹¹
- According to a recent Justice Strategies Report about 287(g) partnerships, “Traffic violators and day laborers are the program’s central targets.”¹²
- On March 4, 2009, the Government Accountability Office criticized ICE’s supervision of the 287(g) program, pointing out the agency’s failure to ensure that the program targeted serious criminal activity, to adequately supervise the program’s participants, to systematically collect data about the program’s operation, and to develop performance measures to fully evaluate the program.¹³
- GAO’s criticisms of the 287(g) program provide an essential lens with which to evaluate Secure Communities, in order to ensure that the same deficiencies in standards, oversight, internal controls, and mechanisms to ensure compliance with stated priorities are not repeated.

What will ICE do if there is a match with DHS records?

- According to ICE, it will then “evaluate each case to determine the individual’s immigration status and take appropriate enforcement action.”¹⁴
- In practice, this means that ICE will likely impose a detainer against the arrested person.

What happens when ICE places a detainer on an individual?

- A detainer is simply a request from ICE that the arresting agency notify ICE before its release of the noncitizen so that ICE can assume custody,¹⁵ and authority for a temporary, 48-hour hold if the noncitizen is not already subject to detention.¹⁶

“Questions about Secure Communities” (continued)

- But many jails and police departments treat detainers as a requirement that the jailed person not be released, and deny bond in the criminal case, including in minor cases such as traffic offenses or misdemeanors.
- ICE procedures provide no mechanism for an arrested person with a detainer to challenge the wrongfulness of a detainer.
- ICE frequently does not comply with the 48-hour time limit within which to assume custody of jailed persons against whom detainers have been issued, leaving them in detention limbo but often without the means to challenge their unlawful detention.

How will ICE ensure that police do not make arrests based on racial or ethnic profiling, or that they do not make arrests simply as a pretext to check immigration status under Secure Communities?

- ICE fact sheets and press releases do not even indicate a recognition of this issue or concern that it might occur.
- Complaints of racial/ethnic profiling and pretextual arrests have been common under the 287(g) program and signal that concern is warranted under related programs such as Secure Communities.
- For example, Phoenix mayor Phil Gordon asked that the U.S. Attorney General order an FBI and U.S. Justice Department Office of Civil Rights investigation of Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio, charging the sheriff with using traffic stops as a means to investigate immigration status.¹⁷ On March 14, 2009, the Justice Department announced a civil rights investigation of the sheriff.¹⁸
- According to the North Carolina report, “Instead of focusing on those people who commit the violent crimes as stated by ICE, local law enforcement officers seem to be targeting drivers of a particular race or national origin and stopping them for traffic violations. For example, during the month of May 2008, eighty-three percent of the immigrants arrested by Gaston County ICE authorized officers

pursuant to the 287(g) program were charged with traffic violations. This pattern has continued as the program has been implemented throughout the state. The arrest data appears to indicate that Mecklenburg and Alamance Counties are typical in the targeting of Hispanics for traffic offenses for the purposes of a deportation policy.”¹⁹

Can a police department opt out of participation in Secure Communities?

- The ICE fact sheets and press releases do not say whether a police department can opt out of participation in Secure Communities.
- Advocates for victims fear that they will not report domestic violence if they believe that the arrest of the abuser on whom they are economically dependent will result in deportation.²⁰

What else do the ICE fact sheets and press releases leave out?

- Any requirement for audits and oversight.
- Ensuring that the DHS databases contain accurate information.
- Providing redress for arrested persons who have been wrongly identified by DHS databases or against whom ICE detainers have been wrongly issued.
- Whether a complaint procedure is available for persons who have been wrongly arrested.
- Ensuring that victims of crimes such as domestic violence can file criminal complaints without their complaints leading to immigration consequences.

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Photo: Todd Drake

Immigrants in the Bible

Immigrants in the Bible

The Bible contains many commands and instructions for how to treat immigrants and workers. The word for “immigrant” in the Bible is often translated as “alien” or “stranger.”

There shall be one law for the native and for the immigrant who resides among you.

Exodus 12:49

But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the non-native resident in your towns.

Exodus 20:10

You shall not oppress a sojourner; you know the heart of an sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:9

The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the immigrant as yourself, for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19:34

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the immigrant: I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23:22

You shall have one law for the immigrant and for the citizen: for I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 24:22

I charged your judges at that time: “Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or sojourner.

Deuteronomy 1:16

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:19

You shall not abhor any of the Edomites, for they are your kin. You shall not abhor any of the Egyptians, because you were strangers residing in their land.

Deuteronomy 23:7

You shall not deprive an immigrant or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge.

Deuteronomy 24:17

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the immigrant, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

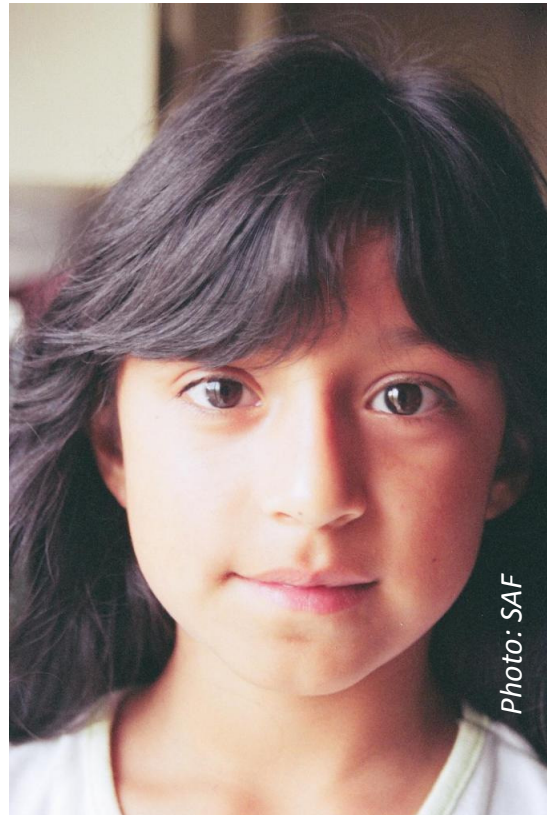
Deuteronomy 24:19

“Cursed be anyone who deprives the immigrant, the orphan, and the widow of justice.” All the people shall say, “Amen!”

Deuteronomy 27:19

I was a father to the needy, and I championed the cause of the stranger.

Job 29:16



Immigrants in the Bible (continued)

Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; do not hold your peace at my tears. For I am your passing guest, an alien, like all my forebears.

Psalm 39:12

The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.

Proverbs 13:23

Thus says the LORD: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.

Jeremiah 22:3

The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the alien without redress.

Ezekiel 22:29

Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.

Zechariah 7:10

Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against . . . those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:5

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Matthew 25:35

Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Romans 12:13

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

James 5:4



Suggested Responsive Reading

Suggested Responsive Reading



From *Interfaith Worker Justice* (www.iwj.org)

We serve a God who directs us to care especially for those most vulnerable in society. Our Scriptures tell us of God's special concern for the "alien" or the "stranger," or as more contemporary translations say—the immigrant.

For the Lord our God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. God defends the cause of the orphan and the widow, and loves the immigrant, giving the immigrant food and clothing. And we are to love those who are immigrants, for God's people were immigrants in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

We ask God to open our eyes to the struggles of immigrant workers, for we know that:

We must not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether the worker is a resident or immigrant living in our town. We must pay the worker the wages promptly because the worker is poor and counting on it. (Deuteronomy 24:14)

God's desire is that those who build houses may live in them,

And that those who plant may eat. (Isaiah 65:22)

And yet we know this is not possible for many in our midst.

We know of farmworkers who cannot feed their families, construction workers who have no homes, nursing home workers who have no health care, restaurant workers who can not afford a meal in the restaurant.

We know that too many immigrant workers among us are not receiving the fruits of their labor, nor the justice required by the courts.

God charges our judges to hear disputes and judge fairly, whether the case involves citizens or immigrants. (Deuteronomy 1:16)

But our laws do not adequately protect immigrants. Our legal and social service programs exclude many immigrants. Our education programs undervalue immigrant children.

God tells us that the community is to have the same rules for citizens and for immigrants living among us. His is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Citizens and immigrants shall be the same before the Lord. (Numbers 15:15)

When an immigrant lives in our land,

We will not mistreat him or her. We will treat an immigrant as one of our native born. We will love an immigrant as ourselves, for God's people were once immigrants in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

To those who employ immigrant workers, we lift up God's command:

Do not oppress an immigrant. God's people know how it feels to be immigrants because they were immigrants in Egypt. (Exodus 23: 9)

And a special word to those who employ immigrant farmworkers:

Make sure immigrants get a day of rest. (Exodus 23:12)

To those who craft our immigration laws and policies, we lift up God's command:

Do not deprive the immigrant or the orphan of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that God's people were slaves in Egypt and the Lord our God redeemed them from there. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18)

To all of us who seek to do God's will, help us to:

Love one another as God has loved us. Help us to treat immigrants with the justice and compassion that God shows to each of us. Amen.

Pastoral Reflection

Pastoral Reflection



North Carolina
Council of Churches

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TEXT: RUTH 1:1-18, NRSV

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die-- there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!" When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

PASTORAL REFLECTION: "LEAVING HOME"

By Rev. Alice Kirkman Kunka, Director, Corazon

Have you ever "left home"? Most of us can relate in some way to the theme of "leaving home," perhaps to go away to school, enter the work force or to start a home of our own. Some people leave not only their home, but their home country. Some leave their homeland in search of a better life, or perhaps even for survival. As we hear the story of Naomi and Ruth, we learn that a famine in Judah has caused Naomi to



Photo: Todd Drake

Pastoral Reflection (continued)

leave the home of her birth to live in Moab, a country foreign to her. We can imagine that Naomi must have felt the hardship of learning to live in a new culture, learning a different language, and feeling like an outsider.

Over the years of living in this new land, Naomi's two sons take Moabite wives, Orpah and Ruth. With the death of Naomi's husband and ten years later the loss of her two sons as well, there must have seemed no reason to remain in this foreign land. So as Naomi prepares to make the trek back to her homeland, we can imagine her surprise when her daughter-in-law Ruth implores her to allow her to return with Naomi to Judah, even though Ruth is a Moabite, an ethnic group hated by those who thought of themselves as "people of God." Something about the God Naomi worshipped has captivated Ruth, and she is willing to give up her homeland to come to this new country, a place where she could well face rejection and be labeled a foreigner.

These two courageous women, each with her own circumstance, become strangers in a strange land. However, in Naomi's homeland, the legislation of the Torah governed the treatment of foreigners. Immigrants were categorized along with widows and orphans, those who had no right to own land, and thus had no livelihood. These marginalized groups depended upon the generosity and concern of those who did have the means of production. The law required farmers to be less than one-hundred-percent efficient in their harvesting, leaving part of the crops in the field and thus allowing immigrants, widows and orphans a means for survival.

Not only did the law give foreigners a way to survive with some measure of dignity, it commanded the people of Israel to treat immigrants living in their midst as some of their own "native-born," admonishing them to "love them as yourself," and reminding them that they, too, were once foreigners in Egypt (Leviticus 19:34). Exodus 22:21-22 echoes this reminder of the time when all of Israel were sojourners in Egypt, forbidding any mistreatment or oppression of sojourners. Even though Ruth was not a native-born "citizen" of this adopted land, she was to be afforded certain protections under the law that ensured her survival.

Stories such as the one of Naomi and Ruth challenge

us to consider how "aliens" are treated in these United States, the country whose Liberty Bell proudly displays the text, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10).

Recently I attended a day-long sensitivity training workshop. It was an excellent event, reflecting on what it means to be sensitive to differences in gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation and race. One of the topics was "white privilege," which has been defined by Dr. Peggy McIntosh of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women as "unearned advantages - privileges that ease life and progress for those who are white Americans, and that impede life changes for those who are people of color." "White privilege" continues to be a very important and necessary reflection. It was during our discussion about "white privilege" that I came to think about another privilege that was not included in our workshop, but perhaps should have been: "U.S. citizenship privilege".

Working on a daily basis with many Latinos who are in North Carolina without documentation, I have become more and more aware of the privileges granted to U.S. citizens. Because many people categorize undocumented immigrants as law-breakers who have entered the U.S. illegally, it somehow makes it "okay" to discriminate against them. After all, why don't they just stay in their own country? Like Naomi who left her homeland because of famine, many are forced from their native country for economic survival. Even so, why do they enter illegally? Can't they just go get the proper documentation and enter legally?

What many of us fail to realize is how unjust U.S. immigration laws are, and how in many cases it is impossible for those who want to come to the U.S. to enter legally. Except for individuals who enter as farm workers under the H2A program, it is very difficult for an immigrant with less than a college degree to be granted a work visa. As U.S. citizens, our experience of going to a foreign country is very different. We think nothing of crossing the border to visit Tijuana, Mexico, for a day of shopping and sightseeing, but Mexican citizens must qualify economically to obtain even a tourist visa to enter the U.S., and there are a great many who do not qualify.

Over the last few years, I have attended several

Pastoral Reflection (continued)

gatherings of undocumented Latinos who volunteered to share their heart-wrenching stories of hardship in crossing the border to enter the U.S. I have asked myself, “What would compel me to risk my life, crossing a barren desert for days without food or water to enter the U.S.?” As I have learned more about the hopeless economic situation that many come from, I have concluded that I would do the same for my family given similar circumstances. But the risk is high: an estimated 2,500 people have died crossing the border since the early 1990s. No one knows the exact number; only God knows.

A few years ago I participated in a program called “Borderlinks” which is based in Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales in the state of Sonora, Mexico. On the Mexico side of the border, we spent the night in a shelter for those who were about to brave the hot, dry Sonoran desert to cross into the U.S., without documents, of course. I will never forget the statistics listed on the walls there which recorded the number of people who had died crossing into the desert. We followed the trail that many had taken and noted evidence of their crossing through clothing and plastic water bottles strewn in the desert. One woman who worked in the shelter told us about a young couple from Guatemala who had stayed there the night before they set out to cross. They had a newborn baby with them. She pleaded with them not to make the treacherous journey, but despite her warnings, they left the next morning. A few days later, the couple was back at the center, just the two of them, having been arrested by the border patrol in the U.S. and returned to Mexico. The worker asked them where their baby was. “Lost,” they said. The desert had proven too inhospitable an environment for such a young infant—a tragic sacrifice made by a young couple in exchange for their hope for a new beginning in a strange new land.

I have been guilty of taking my U.S. citizenship privilege for granted. What about you? What does it mean to have the privilege of U.S. citizenship? Here are a few benefits to consider:

1. If I want to get a driver’s license, it’s a simple matter of bringing along my birth certificate, Social Security card and insurance information and taking the test. There’s no need to worry about whether I have the proper documents to

get a driver’s license.

2. If I apply for a job, I do not have to worry about what to write under “Social Security Number.”
3. When Social Security and Medicare are taken out of my paycheck, I have a reasonable hope that someday either I or my dependents will receive the benefit of those taxes.
4. I can go in any bank and set up a checking account.
5. If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven’t been singled out because of my immigration status.
6. I am not worried on a daily basis about being “discovered” and being deported along with my family.
7. I can be reasonably sure that if I need legal or medical advice or help, my citizenship status will not be a consideration.
8. I can apply for a passport that will allow me to travel back and forth to most countries in the world.
9. I can vote and consider running for political office.
10. I or a member of my family can apply for scholarship aid to institutions of higher education and expect to compete on level ground with other U.S. citizens.

When we reflect on the issue of immigration and the existence of borders between countries, it is good to recall that when seen from outer space, the earth does not reveal any borders. Borders are human-made creations that separate people who are governed by different governments. God’s world has no borders. God does not create “illegal” people. The human condition has created these barriers to the shalom that God intends for creation.

In his book, *Resident Aliens*, Stanley Hauerwas reminds us of the Apostle Paul’s assertion that Christians are a colony of heaven, and as such, are “resident aliens” in this world. As “resident aliens” we have something in common with people of Israel who were once aliens in Egypt. We have something in common with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus who fled the wrath of King Herod and were aliens in Egypt for a time. We have something in common with Ruth and Naomi. And we have something in common with the eleven million undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Additional Worship Resources

Additional Worship Resources

Many faith-based organizations offer extensive worship resources as well as position statements on immigration issues. This list offers a few places to get started.

American Friends Service Committee
www.afsc.org/ImmigrantsRights

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
www.faihandimmigration.org

Church World Service
www.churchworldservice.org

Interfaith Immigration Coalition
www.interfaithimmigration.org

Justice for Immigrants (Catholic)
www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services
www.lirs.org

National Council of Churches
www.nccusa.org/immigration/immigmain.html

National Farm Worker Ministry
www.nfwm.org

North Carolina Council of Churches
www.nccouncilofchurches.org

NC Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants
www.welcometheimmigrant.org

Presbyterian Church (USA)
www.pcusa.org/immigration

United Church of Christ
www.ucc.org/justice/immigration

United Methodist Church
www.umc-gbcs.org

World Relief
www.worldrelief.org/advocate



Photo: AFSC

Social Justice Dates for Promoting Discussion

Social Justice Dates for Promoting Immigration Discussion

January

- 15th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- Third Sunday – World Religions Day

February

- 15th - Birthday of Susan B. Anthony
- 22nd – International Childrens' Day

March

- 8th – International Women’s Day
- 31st - Birthday of Cesar Chavez

April

- 7th – World Health Day
- 21st – Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 22nd – Earth Day

May

- 1st - May Day – International Labor Day
- 7th – National Day of Prayer

June

- 5th - World Environment Day
- 20th - World Refugee Day

July

- 2nd – Day Discrimination in Public Accommodations was made illegal
- 4th – Independence Day
- 11th – World Population Day
- 28th – Day the Constitution’s 14th Amendment went into effect granting due process and equal protection to all

August

- 26th – Day the Constitution’s 19th Amendment went into effect granting full voting rights to women

September

- First Monday – National Labor Day
- 21st - International Day of Peace

October

- 12th – Columbus Day
- 24th – United Nations Day

November

- 6th – World Community Day
- 8th - Birthday of Dorothy Day
- 11th – Veteran’s Day
- Fourth Thursday – Thanksgiving Day

December

- 10th – Day the International Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, including the right to migrate in search of work, safety, etc.
- 15th – Day the Bill of Rights was added to the US Constitution
- 18th - International Migrants Day
- 18th - Day the 13th Amendment to the Constitution went into effect, outlawing slavery

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FAITHACTION INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
A Center for Cross-Cultural Learning & Service

Contacts and Other Resources

Local Contacts and Other Resources

NORTH CAROLINA

www.welcometheimmigrant.org (919) 828-6501
The North Carolina Religious Coalition for Justice for Immigrants is a statewide interfaith effort whose purpose is to provide a religious voice for welcoming immigrants. The Coalition continues to ask people of faith to sign onto a statement welcoming immigrants. The website contains numerous resources, denominational statements, legislative updates, and more information.

www.elpueblo.org (919) 835-1525
El Pueblo, Inc. is a North Carolina non-profit statewide advocacy and public policy organization dedicated to strengthening the Latino Community. This mission is accomplished through leadership development, proactive and direct advocacy, education, and promotion of cross-cultural understanding in partnerships at the local, state, and national levels.

www.nclatinocoalition.org (919) 225-1673
The NC Latino Coalition is a nonpartisan, multi-issue network of organizations dedicated to building relational power among grassroots Latino leaders. We fulfill our goals by identifying, developing and training grassroots leaders, strengthening institutions throughout the provision of technical assistance, and addressing concerns through collective public action.

www.ncjustice.org 919-856-2570
The NC Justice Center offers resources and policy links for various issues affecting working people in North Carolina, including immigration issues.

www.workingfilms.org/newfaces 910-342-9000
New Faces: Latinos In North Carolina is a curriculum-based media project for classrooms and communities that examines the cultural and economic contributions of Latino workers in North Carolina, as well as the challenges they face.

www.unitingnc.org
Uniting NC is a new non-profit organization working to change the tone of the immigration debate across North Carolina. Uniting NC utilizes both grassroots organizing and comprehensive media strategies to highlight positive portrayals of immigrants.



Photo: José Galvez

National Contacts and Learn More: Books

NATIONAL CONTACTS

For contacts and resources from national religious denominations, see "Additional Resources" in the *Worship Resource* section of this guide.

www.aila.org

The American Immigration Lawyers Association offers a plethora of factsheets, policy analysis and resources related to immigration.

www.nilc.org

213-639-3900

The National Immigration Law Center is a national support center whose mission is to protect and promote the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their family members. NILC staff specializes in immigration law, and the employment and public benefits rights of immigrants. NILC conducts policy analysis and impact litigation and provides publications, technical advice, and trainings to a broad constituency of legal aid agencies, community groups, and *pro bono* attorneys.

www.nnirr.org

510-465-1984

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights is a national organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations and activists. NNIRR works to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. Contains useful resources and statistics on immigration.

www.interfaithimmigration.org

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is a coalition of religious groups all supporting immigration reform.

www.immigrationpolicy.org

The Immigration Policy Center's mission is to shape a rational national conversation on immigration and immigrant integration. They provide unbiased research and studies on immigration issues.

www.afsc.org/ImmigrantsRights

<http://coloradansforimmigrantrights.blogspot.com/>

The American Friends Service Committee and a local affiliate, Coloradans For Immigrant Rights, provide a number of resources for immigrants and non-immigrants seeking to support immigrant rights.

LEARN MORE

Books

Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration

By Douglas Massey, Jorge Durland, N. Malone, 2002

Borderland Theology

By Jerry H. Gill, 2003

Communities Without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration

By David Bacon, 2006

Crossing into America: The New Literature of Immigration

Louis Mendoza and S. Shankar, 2003

Defending Immigrant Rights: An Activist Resource Kit

Political Research Associates, 2002

Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence

By Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001

Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants

By David Bacon, 2008

Immigration: A Civil Rights Issue for the Americas

Edited by Susanne Jonas and Suzie Dod Thomas, 1999

Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America

By Mae M. Ngai, 2004

Just Like Us: The True Story of Four Mexican Girls Coming of Age in America

Helen Thorpe, 2009

The Line Between Us: Teaching About the Border and Mexican Immigration

By Bill Bigelow, 2006

No One Is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border

By Justin Akers Chacon and Mike Davis, 2006

Learn More: Reports, Videos, Documentaries

Reports

Loving Thy Neighbor: Immigration Reform and Communities of Faith

Center for American Progress, 2009:

www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/09/loving_thy_neighbor.html

The Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population on the State of North Carolina

UNC Kenan Flagler Business School, 2006:

www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/KI/reports/2006_HispanicStudy/

A comprehensive list of reports (and links) is available at:

www.welcometheimmigrant.org/reports

Videos

DOCUMENTARIES

About 1 Hour or longer

Echando Raices/ Taking Root: Immigrant and refugee communities in California, Texas and Iowa (AFSC). 60 minutes. 2002. This film starts with a focus on Mexican, Hmong, and Guatemalan immigrants in California, moves to Houston, Texas, where immigrants make up 25% of the city, and then finally investigates a meatpacking plant in Iowa that actively recruited Latino employees, whose presence caused resentment among Anglo residents. <http://tools.afsc.org/bigcat/ttl.php?FID=1158>

The Guestworker. 54 minutes, 2006. *The Guestworker* tells the story of Don Candelario Gonzalez Moreno, a 66-year old Mexican farmer who has been coming to the U.S. since the 1960s as an H2A farmworker. www.theguestworker.com

Made in LA / Hecho en Los Angeles. 70 minutes, 2007. *Made in LA* is an Emmy award-winning feature documentary that follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles garment sweatshops as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a trendy clothing retailer. <http://www.madeinla.com>

DOCUMENTARIES

Shorter than 1 hour

The Invisible Chapel. 2009 31 minutes. A conflict with local neighbors, Minutemen and a talk radio host forced the migrants and volunteers who had used "an invisible chapel" for 20 years out of their sacred space and ultimately caused the demolition of their place of worship. www.invisiblechapel.com/

Dying to get in: Undocumented immigration at the US-Mexico Border. 2005. 40 minutes. *Dying to Get In* provides an intimate perspective of border crossing and the people who cross. www.bretttolley.com/dying-to-get-in/index.html

Dying to live: A Migrant's journey. 22 minutes. 2005. *Dying to Live* explores the human side of immigrants and their journeys. This film exposes the places of conflict, pain and hope along the US-Mexico border. It is a reflection on the human struggle for a more dignified life and the search to find God in the midst of that struggle. www.dyingtolive.nd.edu/index.html

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church Series of Immigrant Expert Speakers, four 15-minute speakers covering main topics of concern. Speakers include Greensboro immigration attorney Gerry Chapman, FaithAction International House director Mark Sills, Rev. Virginia Herring, Dr. Nolo Martinez, and Dr. Andrew Brod.

Roots of Migration, excellent 20-minute film about the roots of migration as seen through a Witness for Peace delegation of North Carolinians to Oaxaca, Mexico, in February 2009.

Rights on the Line Vigilantes at the Border (AFSC). 26 minutes. 2009 This film exposes the ugly anti-immigrant politics that lurk behind the Minuteman Project - and shows the continuum between official border militarization and vigilante action. www.witness.org/index.php?option=com_rightsalert&Itemid=178&task=view&alert_id=43

Learn More: Movies, Stories, Activities (continued)

FEATURE-LENGTH MOVIES

El Norte / The North. 130 minutes, 1983. This critically acclaimed film tells the story of a Guatemalan sister and brother who flee persecution at home to seek a better life in the United States. The movie follows their difficult journey and their arrival in Los Angeles, where they still suffer from being uneducated and undocumented.

Sin Nombre. 96 minutes, 2009. A social-political thriller, *Sin Nombre* is set on the border and shares the stories of Sayra, a teenager living in Honduras and hungering for a brighter future, and teen gang members Smiley and Casper, who become interlaced on the train to the border. http://festival.sundance.org/2009/film_events/films/sin_nombre/

La misma Luna / Under the Same Moon. 109 minutes, 2007. Carlos is left by his family in Mexico when his mom moves to LA to work. After four years, Carlos' grandmother dies, and he is determined to make the journey to LA himself. The film follows his journey and the friend and protector he meets along the way. www.foxsearchlight.com/underthesamemoon

The Visitor. 108 minutes. 2008. A powerful story about an American man who gets involved with an undocumented family from Syria & Senegal who came in to his life and wind up in deportation proceedings. Through new-found connections, the man is awakened into a whole new life. www.thevisitorfilm.com

Personal Stories of Immigrants

Facing Deportation: Stories of Families impacted by North Carolina's immigration policies. 4-5 minute moving images and oral stories online: <http://facingdeportation.org/>

Greensboro Movie making class, "My Journey". Contact FaithAction International House or American Friends Service Committee.

Uniting NC, "Profiles," available online at: www.unitingnc.org

Stories of North Carolina students affected by the immigration system: www.adelantenc.org (Resources, Student Stories)

Interviews with immigrant workers in Western North Carolina. Contact COLA, Coalition of Latin American Organizations: www.colawnc.org

Activities

The Immigration Simulation

The NC Immigrant Rights Program of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) offers congregations, groups and schools an interactive "immigration simulation" highlighting the reasons rural Mexicans migrate to the US and some of the challenges they face. During the participatory activity, you will learn about demands on life in rural Mexico, in border towns and in a US worksite, and everyone plays a role. The simulation is engaging, thought-provoking, and also fun. To be effective, you need at the very least 30 participants, a large open space, and at least two full hours. We recommend that you pair the exercise with a video such as the 20-minute film "Roots of Migration" to go more in-depth about the causes of migration with your group. The program was created by Rick Ufford Chase, formerly of BorderLinks, and was adapted by AFSC's NC Immigrant Rights Program. The Simulation materials are available on AFSC-NC's website at www.afsc.org/greensboro by following links to the immigrant rights program or by contacting 336-854-0633.

The White Cross Project

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)'s NC Immigrant Rights Program has 42 free-standing two-foot-high white crosses representing the more than 5,000 deaths on the US-Mexico border since 1994. AFSC also has an accompanying banner, and a factsheet in English and in Spanish explaining what the crosses represent and giving history on Operation Gatekeeper, a government border control program that routes migrants through the life-threatening desert. The crosses, banner, and factsheets are all available for lending if your group would like to educate the community about border deaths.

In Case of Emergency

Important Phone Numbers in Case of Immigration Emergency

To locate detained persons:

ICE Charlotte (704) 672-6995
ICE Cary (919) 678-8807
ICE Atlanta (404) 331-2765
ICE Washington DC (202) 305-2734

ICE general information number
1 800-898-7180

You must know the Alien Identification Number (begins with "A")

Other jails and detention centers:

Alamance County Jail (336) 570-6300
Mecklenburg County Jail (704) 336-8100
Atlanta Municipal Detention Center (Georgia)
(404) 865-8010
Stewart Detention Center (Georgia) (229) 838-5000
Etowah Correctional Center (Alabama)
(256) 439-6035

Mexican Consulate in Raleigh (919) 754-0046



Prepare yourself in case of an immigration emergency

Obtain a Passport from your home country for yourself and your children. If you do not have one, you can spend a lot of time in prison before your deportation is finalized, while the Consul of your country verifies your identity, and your children will need a Passport if they will accompany you to your home country.

Fill out a Power Of Attorney, so that your relatives or friends can sell your car or land or manage your bank accounts, if necessary. Choose only a trustworthy person that you know very well.

Write down details about your children. For example, where do they go to school? What time do they come home? Who would you want to take care of them if you were not around?

Designate in writing another person who has permission to take your children out of the country.

Make a plan with your family and friends to carry out in case you are detained or deported. Designate a person to manage your affairs and to communicate with authorities.

Learn the phone numbers of local organizations that can help you in case of immigration emergency.

The Sister Evelyn Mattern Fund

Sister Evelyn Mattern was a program associate with the North Carolina Council of Churches and an advocate for some of the state's most vulnerable residents. Evelyn worked for many social justice causes, including the Equal Rights Amendment, fair treatment of farmworkers, protection of the environment, non-violence, and an end to the death penalty. She was a champion for people who often lacked a voice, lending them hers in the General Assembly in Raleigh, the hallways of Congress, and editorial pages across the state.

She was a published author with a doctorate in English who taught at St. Augustine's College and Wake Technical Community College during her thirty years in North Carolina. Evelyn created the Office of Peace and Justice for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh. And, she worked for sixteen years at the North Carolina Council of Churches, serving as a lobbyist, publications editor, and program associate. Her work touched many lives.

When more than 200 of her friends gathered at a luncheon held in Raleigh to honor Evelyn prior to her departure for hospice care in Philadelphia, speakers cited her commitment to others, her deep faith, and her influence as a mentor. They also noted her love of books, celebrations, and ice cream. "We need someone to come forward and replace her," said one of the speakers, the Rev. Joseph Gossman, then Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh. "But she is irreplaceable."

During her final illness, Evelyn's friends and colleagues established the Sr. Evelyn Mattern Fund to honor her life and to continue her ministry. One of the grants from the Fund is in support of this Toolbox on immigration issues. Evelyn passed away in Philadelphia on the first Sunday of Advent 2003, after a year-long struggle with lung cancer. You can donate to the Sister Evelyn Fund by visiting the Council's website at: www.nccouncilofchurches.org and clicking on "Donate Now" under "Get Involved." Please specify that your gift is for the Sister Evelyn Fund.



Photo: José Galvez



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Area Office of the Carolinas



**North Carolina
Council of Churches**