



God's love has **NO** borders

Action

In the biblical tradition of hospitality, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, at the request of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference and Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH), encourages congregations to act on the Atlanta 2003 Immigration Statement during the critical month of March 2006.

Fax your letters.

- Since the anthrax scare, postal letters to Washington, DC are inefficient.
- Use this address to find your senators' fax numbers: www3.capwiz.com/c-span/dbq/officials

Register your letters on the MCC Letters on the Line website.

- www.mcc.org/lettersontheline

Send a fax to your Senator during March 2006.

In March, Senators will be deciding their response to the Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437), passed by the U.S. House of Representatives just before Christmas 2005. Please see the Information sheet for details on this bill.

Contacting your legislators is consistently found to be the most influential way to affect their position. Communicating faith-based concerns about public policy is a powerful means of witness since legislators consider one letter from a constituent to represent the views of about 100 people. Only five percent of Americans communicate with their representatives in government. Of those, only one percent communicate on matters going beyond self-interest to focus on the hurting people of our world.

You don't have to be an expert on an issue to express your concerns. The conviction behind your words is as persuasive as extensive knowledge of an issue. Write from your heart. What policies do you think will lead to justice and peace for immigrants?

Talking points

- **True immigration reform will reunite separated families**, end militarization of the U.S./Mexico border, allow workers to come and go safely across the border and create a path to citizenship for those undocumented immigrants who wish to stay.
- **Increased border security without true immigration reform will not work.** Until immigration laws allow workers to enter the country legally—and most importantly, until we address the economic policies that impoverish migrants' home countries—immigrants will continue to cross our borders. The U.S. economy depends on foreign workers; pretending otherwise is not truthful.
- **Increased border security without true immigration reform will increase immigrant deaths in the desert.** In the past decade, tightening security has only pushed migrants further into the desert.
- **Reinforcing the current border security strategy is throwing money at a failed plan.** Despite spending billions of dollars on border security over the past decade, the Border Patrol itself acknowledges that more undocumented migrants are entering the country today than ten years ago.

- **Church workers and social service providers** should not be made criminals for doing their work. Passing a law that makes social assistance illegal will result in many respected people of goodwill spending time in jail. “Giving a cup of cold water,” as the Bible demands of us, should not be a felony.

Specific contacts

- **Senate:** Tell your senator that the Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act (H.R. 4437) will hurt immigrant communities and inhibit the immigration work of churches. Urge him or her to support true immigration reform, especially if your senator is on the Judiciary Committee, which is responsible for drafting immigration legislation.
- **House:** Check your representative’s vote on H.R. 4437 (see www.mcc.org/lettersontheline). Thank your representative for voting against the bill—or if he or she supported it, ask why and share your vision for true immigration reform.
- **President:** In his State of the Union address, the president called for “rational, humane” immigration policy. Still, he supported H.R. 4437, the Sensenbrenner-King bill. Share your vision for true immigration reform.

Hints for effective faxes

- Be brief. Keep your fax short and sweet and focus on one subject.
- Discussing current legislation receives more attention than general observations.
- Identify the bill. Cite the bill number and summarize it since hundreds of bills cross legislators’ desks.
- State your purpose. Clearly identify what you’re asking the legislator to do.
- Give your reasons. Don’t be afraid to make the letter personal. Explain how your experience, observations or Christian faith shapes your concerns. However, do not encourage legislators to act as Christians unless you are sure they are.
- Be constructive. Emotional outrage, “holier-than-thou” tones, or threats are more likely to generate an adverse reaction. Let your legislator know why you feel strongly, but try to be positive and not merely critical.
- Ask a question. If you want more than a form letter response, raise a specific question. A well-stated question can express a viewpoint and, at the same time, stimulate a response.
- Say “well done.” Thank your legislators when they vote the way you recommend or take a courageous stand. We should not forget they are human too and appreciate encouragement.

For more details, see www.mcc.org/lettersontheline



Wear this button to

- raise awareness of immigration issues,
- take a public stand and
- be a welcoming presence in our communities.

Available from OneSource (www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources).



Excerpts from an 11-page handbook to assist MCC constituents in witness to the government. Order the entire booklet in English or Spanish from the Washington Office. (\$2) NOTE NEW ADDRESS: MCC Washington Office, 920 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003. Tel: (202)544-6564, fax: (202)544-2820, mccwash@mcc.org

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership Staff: Kenyetta Aduma Twine [KenyettaA@MennoniteUSA.org] and Susan Mark Landis [SusanML@MennoniteUSA.org]. Graphic design: Cynthia Friesen Coyle. March 2006.