



Immigrant flag in El Paso, TX. Photo: Columban Mission Center

Presidents' Day 2015

Still Praying for Relief

ACT

Call your Member of Congress TODAY and ask them to support actions taken by the Administration to grant temporary relief from deportation for millions of our immigrant brothers and sisters. Urge them to oppose any anti-immigrant bills that would undo Administrative action, that would militarize our borders, and that would decrease protections to vulnerable migrants in need of refuge.

Please call 1-866-940-2439 to get connected to your Member of Congress.



Faith leaders pray for administrative relief for immigrants in front of the White House in September. Photo: CWS

PRAY

Loving God,

We know that you call us to speak against injustice, and to protect the most marginalized among us.

Help guide us to relay your teachings of love, and to carry out your will to welcome our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Give us the strength and wisdom to persevere when all hope seems lost.

Continue to aid those who suffer as a result of our broken immigration system.

Amen

REFLECT

As people of faith, our commitments are motivated by our scriptures and values that call us hundreds of times to provide refuge to those who need it. Over 200 times, the Hebrew scriptures speak of “mishpat” (justice); urging equitable treatment for all, and care for vulnerable immigrants, the poor, oppressed, and widows. Leviticus 19:33-34 urges that “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress them....but the stranger ...shall be to you as the citizen among you. You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

This Presidents Day, we remember how our presidents, past and present, have acted to welcome our immigrant ancestors. Today, we give thanks for the Obama Administration’s executive action that expands deferred action to 5 million immigrants, but we also remember those who are still waiting for relief to come.



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Immigrant Stories



Photo: Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

An undocumented couple in their fifties endured a 12-year legal nightmare in immigration court because they hired an ineffective immigration attorney who landed them in deportation proceedings instead of helping them get work permits as promised. A negotiated settlement with the government's attorney administratively closed their removal proceedings but gave them no legal status. This couple has lived and worked in the U.S. for 20 years, paying taxes the entire time. They have two daughters who are U.S. citizens and one daughter who has her green card. Deferred Action Parents of Americans (DAPA) will finally give them another level of protection from deportation, but will not grant legal status. We give thanks for the relief that finally came to them through the President's executive action, but continue to pray for a comprehensive solution to our broken immigration system. (Story: Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries)

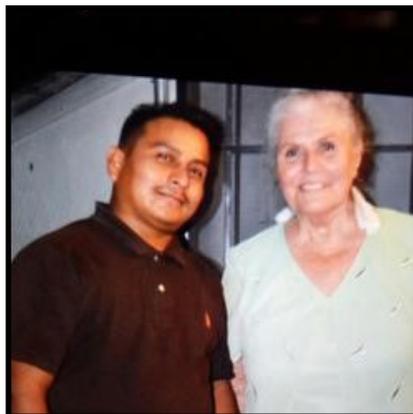


Photo: Groundswell

Eleazar Misael Perez Cabrera is waiting in hope for relief from his deportation order. Nine years ago, he made the difficult journey to the U.S. from Guatemala to provide for his parents and younger siblings. He is a valued employee and member of his community and has been working as a roofer for the past 6 years. Currently, Misael is in sanctuary at the Shadow Rock United Church of Christ in Phoenix, AZ after being pulled over in Phoenix — he did not even receive a ticket for any traffic violation. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—which has broad authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion—should recognize Misael's commitment to his community and stop his deportation proceeding. [Sign the petition](#), and ask the Obama administration to close or put a stay on Misael's deportation order. (Story: Groundswell)



Photo: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services

Maricel fled El Salvador with her one year old daughter in December 2014 in order to escape increasing violence and extortion from local criminal gangs. Her husband had left El Salvador for the United States several months earlier and the gangs quickly took advantage of Maricel's vulnerable situation by threatening her if she did not pay them large sums of money. Maricel made the decision to undergo the dangerous journey, with her toddler, to the United States. After crossing the border, Maricel was detained by Customs and Border Protection for several days before being transferred to the newly-opened family detention facility in Dilley, Texas. Like many other women held in family detention with their young children, Maricel was found by an asylum officer to have a credible fear of harm if return to El Salvador and may now apply for asylum. Unfortunately, the Administration continues to expand the use of family detention facility despite being inappropriate for families and lacking access to legal services. (Story: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services)

For resources on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA), please visit: www.interfaithimmigration.org/issues/administrative-action-resources