

WISDOM Calls for Immigration Reform

As members of **WISDOM** (an organization comprised of 90 congregations, of 14 religious denominations, from throughout Southeastern Wisconsin), we are saddened and angered by the negative attitudes towards immigrants in this country and the dishonorable way they are frequently treated.

Many of our immigrants live in daily fear of the government. They fear the enforcement of immigration laws that are punitive, unduly harsh, inflexible, and result in the separation of families. The sweeping, retroactive nature of the laws causes fear even among legal residents, whose rights can be taken from them.

The vast majority of immigrants pay taxes and make positive contributions to our churches and our neighborhoods. Their labor contributes greatly to the strength of our economy. The majority of what we read and hear about immigrants is not based on fact.

Myth #1: Immigrants take jobs away from Americans.

Fact: Studies have shown that the opposite is true – Many immigrants create jobs. Many immigrants are self-employed and start their own businesses, thus creating jobs.

Myth #2: America is being overrun by immigrants

Fact: The percentage of immigrants in the total population has decreased. So far, no single decade has topped 1901-1910 for immigration admissions. Less than 1.5 percent of the world's refugee population finds its way to the U.S.

Myth #3: Most immigrants are a drain on the U.S. economy

Fact:	Each year immigrants	Earn:	\$240 billion
		PAY:	\$90 billion in TAXES
		Receive:	\$5 billion in welfare

As WISDOM, immigrants and non-immigrants alike, we need to stand together and educate our communities, especially our federal, state, and local leaders about current immigration issues. Keep in mind that **United we ALL stand and divided we ALL fall.**

In our struggle for equitable treatment of our nation's immigrants, we need to fight for the following:

- **"Immigrant Fairness Act of 2001" (Senate Bill 955).**
- **Residency for undocumented workers already residing in the U.S. who have proven to be productive members of our society.**
- **Revision of immigration laws that are unduly harsh and which lead to separation of families.**
- **Revision of immigration laws to provide due process for all people in the U.S.**

We call on our elected officials to act immediately before the inequitable, unfair, and often times inhumane treatment of our immigrants worsens. We call upon our legislators to demonstrate leadership and courage in taking up this issue. WISDOM will continue to work to make this crisis known, and to demand that our elected officials act responsibly toward our next generation of leaders and taxpayers.

September 30, 2001 marks the 5th anniversary of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996. **WISDOM will rally on September 30, 2001 to demand the repeal of these oppressive provisions by supporting Senate Bill 955. We look forward to your presence and commitment to fight for just immigration laws.**

WISDOM is a collaboration of four (4) congregation-based organizations: MICAH (Milwaukee), HOSEA (Southern Milwaukee County), RIC (Racine) and CUSH (Kenosha). For more information, call 414.449.0805 or e-mail: josep@micahempowers.org