

BRIDGES for a Just Community
Statement on Immigration Reform and National Origin Discrimination

BRIDGES for a Just Community appreciates the complex challenges associated with immigration reform and the current controversy to define citizenship and appropriate legal status for undocumented persons within our borders.

The leadership of our nation is charged with making tough decisions to keep our borders and economy strong. BRIDGES unequivocally supports our nation's right to limit the number of immigrants permitted to enter our country each year and further, the right to deport those who violate our immigration laws.

Yet, in our reasonable efforts to regulate immigration and moderate the volatility of our evolving economy, we must not devolve into a nation of individuals intolerant of those arriving in our country frequently in the same way, under similar circumstances, and seeking the same promise and opportunity, as many of our ancestors. Those affected by our immigration policies should be treated with the same respect and dignity owed to all citizens, guests, and visitors in our country. Even those in our nation illegally must be treated humanely, with the same rights America affords all who have broken laws.

BRIDGES deplores all forms of ethnic prejudice, violence and anti-immigrant vigilantism, and calls upon all Americans to move beyond nativism and hostility and work toward a fair resolution of the issues through reasoned and respectful dialogue. We call upon our elected representatives to be mindful of the consequences of their actions and urge all in Greater Cincinnati to closely examine the purpose underlying local and national immigration reform efforts to discern between those policies designed to practically manage immigration and those designed to intimidate and harass persons of a different national origin. Too often efforts to reform immigration have been nothing more than veiled attempts to make immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, and foreign-born citizens who speak English as a second language feel unwelcome. Our policies must not implicitly encourage the mistreatment of immigrants or citizens who speak English as their second language.

BRIDGES pledges to continue its work to achieve inclusion, equity, and justice for all immigrants and foreign-born citizens in the United States.