

## **Jewish Community Action Stands for Fair and Humane Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

As American Jews, we represent an immigrant people living within a nation that is rich with diversity of history and experience. Since the beginning of our history, Jews have known the experience of being immigrants and wanderers. Indeed, the first commandment given to Abraham is “leave your land, your people and your parental home.” As slaves in the land of Egypt, we experienced the worst of what foreignness can entail. Accordingly, our legal and ethical teachings demand that our own experience of being strangers in other lands compels us to care for the newcomers within our own communities. The Torah alone presents dozens of commandments governing the treatment of strangers, including the prohibition against oppressing the other, and the mandate to make “one law for both the citizen and stranger among you” (Exodus 22:20, 24:22).

We in the Jewish community know that people do not flee their homes without reason. They leave to escape oppression, violence, poverty, and desperation. They emigrate in the belief that new surroundings offer better opportunities and a better life. Many have sought such opportunity in the U.S. and have become our neighbors. They are individuals striving for the very same things that we seek to give our families, and they come with the same hopes as our own grandparents. We cannot look at the immigration question without seeing the faces of our friends and forebears. Much like the first Jewish immigrants who arrived in the United States 350 years ago, today’s immigrants seek freedom and the opportunity to build new lives, to make contributions and to become full participants in American society.

As Jews, our history and religion teach us that we must speak up when we see injustice. This is why Jewish Community Action joins a century-long legacy of American Jews supporting immigrant rights. Because our current immigration system is out of line with Jewish values of dignity and human rights for all, JCA joins AFFIRM, a Minnesota coalition of organizations working to pass fair and humane comprehensive immigration reform.

Alliance for Fair Federal Immigration Reform of Minnesota (AFFIRM)

We AFFIRM the rights of immigrants, AFFIRM the contribution they make to our economy, and promote fair immigration policy and legislation.

### **Purpose**

AFFIRM is an alliance of immigrant groups, religious and labor organizations, lawyers and legal services, advocacy organizations, and businesses working together to advocate for fair immigration legislation and policy at the local, state, and federal level that respects and protects immigrants.

### **Principles**

**Path to U.S. Citizenship:** All immigrants who live and work in the United States, paying taxes, and contributing to the good of this nation should have the opportunity to pursue permanent resident status and citizenship in the United States.

**Family Reunification:** Family members of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents should have the legal means to immediately reunite with parents, spouses, and children in the United States and have access to education and employment opportunities.

**Legalization of Future Migration Flows:** Immigration laws should establish a mechanism to legalize future migration flows so that immigrants who fulfill the economic needs or who are pursuing family reunification could enter legally, with full respect to their rights as human beings and as workers, and with a path to permanent resident status and citizenship.

**Protection of Human Rights, Dignity and Due Process:** Human rights and due process protections must be guaranteed to all people, regardless of immigration status. Immigration enforcement practices should respect the dignity of all, and should not use racial profiling and other discriminatory practices.

**Protection of Workers and Employers:** Immigration law should provide employers with a mechanism to hire and retain valued employees, while guaranteeing employees a right to change employers and providing a path to apply for permanent resident status. Workers' rights, including the right to unionize, shall be guaranteed to all workers. Immigration law should not place the burden and cost of enforcing immigration laws on employers.