



Presbyterian Policy on Immigration

The 219th General Assembly (2010) Resolution Regarding a Call to Stand with Immigrant Presbyterians in Their Hour of Need.

The 206th General Assembly (1994) adopted the “Call to Presbyterians to Recommit to Work and Pray for a Just and Compassionate U.S. Immigration Policy.” Again, in 1999 and 2004 Presbyterians, through General Assembly actions, guided by theological and ethical principles, continued to call for a commitment from both Presbyterians and the government to work toward welcoming immigrants into communities and providing just laws that affect those who live and work in the United States. In 2010 Presbyterians addressed the most appropriate way to respond to state laws that result in members of the population being targeted for increased scrutiny.

1. Refrain from holding national meetings at hotels or non-PC(USA) conference centers in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162.

a. If individual congregations and camp and conference facilities deem it necessary, the PC(USA) and its staff will offer nonfinancial support for the creation of accompaniment programs to support persons of color who feel that they are at risk when attending church-sponsored worship or programs.

b. If such laws are passed in states where the PC(USA) camp and conference centers are located, the 219th General Assembly (2010) encourages those centers to develop ‘sanctuary’ responses that would create safe places for all participants, allowing the denomination to continue to support its own conference centers, and encourages the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of the General Assembly Mission Council to offer support to partners across the denomination as they develop a process to train volunteers to document abuses and collect data on those abuses to share with the broader church.

2. Direct the Office of Immigration to develop resources that educate Presbyterians about the history of immigrant policies, the beneficial aspects of immigration in the United States as well as official anti-immigration conduct, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that was not repealed until 1943; the forced migration of persons of Mexican descent from California between 1929 and 1939, 60 percent of whom were U.S. citizens; and the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to detention camps during World War II.

3. Direct the Office of Immigration to develop resources that educate Presbyterians about the origins of this most recent legislation, with a special focus on those states that are considering enactment of copycat legislation.

4. Empower the Immigration Office of the PC(USA) to provide a legal resource to PC(USA) congregations in states experiencing the introduction of SB 1070 copycat legislation.”

5. Direct the Stated Clerk to ask the National Council of Churches to request the churches of North America to join our sister churches in Europe in a common day of prayer to commemorate those migrants who have died on their journey.”