



**Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Statement**  
Immigration Legislation in Congress  
March 25, 2006

**In light of** U.S. Senate debates about immigration reform and the provision in House Bill 4437 that would criminalize church workers and social service providers who assist undocumented immigrants, the executive committee of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. (MCC U.S.) passed the following statement at its March 24-25 meeting in Akron, Pa.

**As a Christian agency** committed to peace and justice, MCC U.S. represents its constituent churches in working with immigrants to provide physical, emotional and spiritual assistance to those in need. MCC has a long history of welcoming strangers, growing out of its belief that Jesus calls us to feed the hungry, give a cup of water to the thirsty, clothe the naked and welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35).

**Historically**, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have chosen not to obey laws that are inconsistent with Jesus' teachings. Even before the law made provisions for conscientious objectors, many refused to serve in the military. Others have chosen not to pay military taxes. In the 1980s some Anabaptist congregations broke the law to become sanctuary churches for refugees fleeing violence in Central America.

**Therefore:**

1. We commit ourselves to helping anyone who asks including the strangers/immigrants in our midst regardless of their legal status in this country.
2. We are committed to obeying God rather than human authority, especially when laws call us to harm others and block us from efforts to protect life.
3. We commit ourselves to support MCC workers who are working with immigrants by:
  - a. praying for them, their families and their work on a daily basis.

- b. giving them our moral support as they continue in their work assignments.
  - c. providing the financial resources needed for any legal defense or penalties imposed because of the work we have asked them to do.
4. We will partner with denominations to provide financial resources to assist individuals and congregations with legal costs.
5. We encourage our constituent denominations to call on area conferences, districts and congregations to provide financial help and set aside monies in case pastors or other church workers would need any legal help.

**We also:**

1. Call the U.S. government to enact realistic, humane and just comprehensive immigration reform.
2. Ask that any immigration reform provide workers with sufficient labor protections, reunite separated families, end militarization of the U.S./Mexico border, allow workers to come and go safely across the border and create a path to legalization for those undocumented immigrants who wish to stay.
3. Ask the government not to force church workers to choose between obeying the dictates of their faith and the dictates of their government.
4. Call the U.S. government to create economic policies that will assist developing countries and provide for fair trade. If people are able to provide a decent living for their families, many would choose to stay in their home countries.
5. Ask the U.S. government to make trade agreements and institutions more accountable.

