

Talking Points

Protect Immigrants in Our Communities

NCJW Message: Since its founding in 1893, NCJW has engaged in service and advocacy on behalf of immigrants. Today, NCJW works for comprehensive, humane, and equitable immigration and naturalization laws that facilitate and expedite legal status for more individuals. As such, we support comprehensive immigration reform that provides opportunities for hard-working undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and citizenship. This includes expedited family reunification by reducing the waiting periods that keep immigrant families apart, establishment of humane border security policies, and policies that ensure immigrant women and families have access to basic human services during the legalization process. NCJW urges Congress to oppose all efforts that harm immigrants seeking better lives in the United States.

Talking Points

- Young immigrants enrolled in the recently ended Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, must be protected. Almost 800,000 young people used DACA to pursue education, careers, and families. When President Trump ended DACA on September 5, 2017, he put these young individuals, also called Dreamers, at risk for deportation. Congress must pass the Dream Act (S 1615 / HR 3440) to protect Dreamers and provide them with a path to citizenship. Further, the bill must not be used as a bargaining chip to increase funding for immigration detention and deportation — it is cruel to protect these individuals at the expense of their family members.
- The president’s attack on sanctuary cities undermines our safety. The Trump Administration’s executive order, “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States,” threatens to withhold funds from “sanctuary cities” — cities or jurisdictions that limit how local law enforcement can cooperate with federal immigration agents. Involving police in deportation makes it more difficult and risky for immigrants and their families to step forward as victims or witnesses of crimes and to participate freely in community life.
- Raids tear families and communities apart. President Trump’s executive order also expanded by millions the population of immigrants eligible for deportation. Increasing numbers of immigrants have been arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and agents have been reported following individuals and arresting them at work or school. Raids separate family members by detaining and deporting individuals that have committed no

crime. They also cast a shadow across whole communities, making it nearly impossible for people to work, attend school, worship, and live their lives without fear.

- Denying benefits to immigrants flies in the face of their contributions to society. Currently, undocumented immigrants contribute billions of dollars in state and local taxes, and second generation immigrants are among the strongest contributors to the US economy. Immigrants must continue to be eligible for human services, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and federal financial aid for higher education. Further, we must remove existing legal and policy barriers to immigrants' ability to obtain the health coverage they need for those currently excluded from federal health programs.
- The immigrant experience is a recent memory for many of us and our families. As of immigrants ourselves, or descendants of those who came to the US to escape violence or to seek a better life, we connect with today's immigrants. Further, we are compelled by our Jewish values to welcome the stranger, for once we were strangers. We understand the need for comprehensive immigration reform and to protect immigrants and their families already living in the United States.