



THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

*“You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”*  
Exodus 22:21

*“If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.”*  
Leviticus 19:32-34

## SISTERS TAKE CORPORATE STAND ON IMMIGRATION (1996)

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The rise of anti-immigrant bias and backlash in the United States and congressional legislation severely restricting the number of and conditions for admitting immigrants seeking political asylum gravely concerns the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. With members working with Hispanic and other immigrant populations within the United States and in other countries suffering political persecution and economic hardship, the members decided, in August, 1996, to take a stand to work for more just and humane immigration legislation.

Our first step in implementing this stand was to circulate throughout the Congregation a petition to congress to support HR 2652. This bill called for the closure of the School of the Americas, (SOA), an institution which trained the officers who were responsible for the assassinations of Archbishop Romero, the four U.S. churchwomen, the six Jesuits and their helpers in El Salvador, and countless others in Central America. Throughout the following years, members have continued to work for the closure of this school, now known as WHINSEC (Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation), through prayer, vigils, and legislative advocacy.

Today members continue to seek just Comprehensive Immigration Reform through legislation and take action to diminish the economic and political hardships immigrants face, including those who are undocumented.

This stand flows from our Gospel values, the social teachings of the Church, our Franciscan identity, and our Commitment Statement in which we declare we...  
“are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world, especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.”

## RATIONALE

We would like to share with you a sampling of the rationale which was given in support of a corporate stand on immigration.

- Matthew 25 reminds us that "...in so far as you did it to one of the least of mine, you did it to me."
- In light of Catholic social teaching, every person has a right to a dignified human life with housing, education, the right to work, and health care.
- Our Commitment Statement declares we ...*"are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world, especially with women, children, and those who have no voice."*

## STATEMENT

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia take a corporate stand against the unjust practices of the U.S. government toward aliens seeking political asylum within the U.S.

## ACTION STEPS

- We will pray for our brothers and sisters who are immigrants and for a changed heart for those who fail to see immigrants as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We will educate ourselves, those with whom we minister, and others on the need for comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a path to citizenship for the undocumented and changes to our employment and family-based immigration systems.
- We will strive to be present and accompany immigrants in their adjustments.
- We will share and request furniture, clothing, linens, and household items for their use.
- We will encourage one another to share our talents to benefit our immigrant brothers and sisters.
- We will advocate for legislative reform that cares for the needs of the immigrants.
- We will write legislators calling for just comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a temporary worker program, family-based immigration reform that reduces backlogs, basic due process protections for immigrants, and one that refrains from criminalizing immigrants and those who assist them with their basic needs.
- We will engage in shareholder advocacy with corporations related to worker's rights and working conditions, especially in farming communities.
- We will share our resources with organizations working with immigration issues, e.g., through social justice.