

New York State Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform

*For Immediate Release
April 6, 2009*

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News Release

Interfaith Leaders Unite in Holy Times to Call for Just and Humane Immigration Reform

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20 faith organizations announce launch of NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform

New York, NY. Today, as Christians begin Holy Week and Jews prepare to celebrate Passover, prominent leaders from diverse faith traditions came together at The Interchurch Center to call on President Obama and the 111th Congress to enact comprehensive, just and humane reform of our nation's immigration system. Congressman Charles Rangel (NY-15) joined the faith leaders to affirm the call and reiterate his commitment to do his part in Congress to make just and humane immigration reform a reality.

The leaders represented New York's many faith communities – Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh – and, together, they made a resounding call for our elected leaders to pass immigration reform legislation. They also announced the launch of the NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform, a network of faith community leaders and organizations formed in order to advocate for immigration reform through communication with Congressional leaders. The network will be meeting with members of Congress across New York State on April 13 and 14th to discuss the need for immigration reform.

“Faith leaders have come together today to make an important and unified call to fix our nation's broken immigration system,” said Diane Steinman, co-coordinator of the NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform and Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee New York Chapter. “We look to our faith traditions to call for a new immigration law that enables 12 million undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and eventual citizenship, and so come out of the shadows; that makes family unity a key priority; that provides due process protection and reforms detention policies; that protects workers from abuse; and that protects refugees and asylum seekers. Only through such reform will America live up to its promise of liberty and justice for all.”

Bishop Jeremiah Park of the United Methodist Church New York Conference affirmed the need for just and humane immigration reform. “Communities are living in fear, families are being torn apart, and immigrants are being kept from contributing to our nation. We call for a humane and just law that lives up to the demand of our faith traditions to welcome the stranger,” said Park.

Imam Al-Hajj Talib ‘Abdur-Rashid of the Mosque of the Islamic Brotherhood said, “We of the Muslim community in America recognize that federal inertia creates local injustice. We are here in solidarity with other people of faith to stand for justice.” Imam Talib joined faith leaders from throughout New York State to call for reform of America's immigration system.

“Hope stirred in the hearts of my grandparents, a hope so powerful that it moved my grandparents to traverse dangerous borders, to board ships for a distant land,” said Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz, Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Yisrael of Armonk, New York. “That same hope stirs in the hearts of God's good children in distant lands. We cannot criminalize hope for opportunity. We cannot criminalize hope for freedom.”

For more information about the New York State Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform, contact Diane Steinman of the American Jewish Committee NY Chapter (212-891-1445), Annie Rawlings of The Presbytery of New York City (212-870-2221), Sarah Sayeed of The Interfaith Center of New York (212-870-3519) or Frances Liu at The New York Immigration Coalition (212-627-2227 x246).

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