

1 **Document: 700.02**

2 **Name: Who Are Our Neighbors? Standing with our Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers**
3 **Communities**

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5 **co-chairs; Paula Roderick, Broadway UMC**

6 **CCFA Action:**

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8 **ACTION:**
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10 The NIC reaffirms its commitment to support the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to
11 legal services, health, housing, education, and other necessary services to become full members of our
12 communities. We urge NIC members to renew our commitment to:

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14 1. Support Immigration Law and Justice Network (formerly national JFON) and other
15 advocacy and support groups such as Interfaith Immigration Coalition, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant
16 and Refugee Rights, and Chicago LGBT Asylum Support Program (CLASP).

17 2. Join JFON and other advocacy groups in taking legislative advocacy at the State level to
18 urge our elected officials to take bolder actions to increase the funds available for legal resources; to
19 strengthen the TRUST Act (link below in Rationale) to adapt to federal changes and close the loopholes;
20 to require medical financial information be made available; to expand and protect healthcare for all low-
21 income immigrants age 42 or older and children age 18 and younger, regardless of their immigration
22 status, to provide safe schools for all-Illinois must take affirmative steps to ensure parents are not
23 discouraged from sending and children are not discouraged from attending schools, as is their right; and
24 to take other actions to benefit not only migrants but other low income communities.

25 3. And, we urge our churches to work with immigrant rights groups such as JFON, Refugee
26 One, and Illinois Coalition For Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) to educate our members,
27 including hosting or cosponsoring “know your rights” trainings, organize rapid response teams and how
28 best to make our sanctuaries, churches, and communities safer and welcoming to our newcomers; and,

29 4. To challenge the current administration to stop its criminalization, detention, and
30 deportation of immigrants and instead to work on ways to make pathways to citizenship easier and not
31 more restrictive.
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33 **RATIONALE:**
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35 The current administration has declared war on immigrants and has taken every step to dismantle the
36 immigration system in the United States. There is an anti-immigrant sentiment that has been built and
37 immigrants are being signaled out as criminals and as the enemy. There have been several executive
38 orders ending refugee and asylum protections denying asylum seekers at the border their basic human
39 rights to seek safety. Asylum seekers are being denied entry and interviews at the boarder. The CBP
40 application that allowed asylum seekers to register for an appointment was ended and all appointments
41 were cancelled. Cancellation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS)- There have been over half a million
42 migrants impacted by the executive orders cancelling Temporary Protected Status.
43

44 Many migrants are facing fear of being deported back to a country and a situation that is not safe for them
45 to live in. Many victims of war do not have a place or a home to go back to and many displaced families

1 are in fear of hunger and violence if they are forced to return to countries, they came seeking refuge from.
2 Stand against family detention, or detaining immigrant parents with their children in jail-like conditions,
3 often for significant lengths of time.

4 Since the beginning of the administration there has been an increase in the threat of deportation and
5 family detention and the detention of children. Asylum seekers, refugees, TPS holders, DACA recipients,
6 and all immigrants that call the United States their home are in fear of being deported and being separated
7 from their families.

8 This administration has invoked the alien enemies act and is using this abuse of power to detain and
9 deport individuals without charges and without any court process, even if they have status in the U.S.
10 This is a clear violation of due process protections. The abuse and overreach of this authority increases
11 racial profiling in the U.S and targets individuals based on their national origin.

12 According to the Department of Homeland security themselves, there is no safe or humane way to detain
13 human beings. ([https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/ACFRC-sc-](https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/ACFRC-sc-16093.pdf)
14 [16093.pdf](https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/ACFRC-sc-16093.pdf)). Even short periods of detention cause irreparable harm to children's physical and mental
15 health. We demand that family detention be ended and that the administration stops criminalizing families
16 that are seeking refuge. We stand against any kind of jailing of families and children and against the
17 separation of families. We call for strengthening the TRUST Act
18 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3818>).

19 The administration has also tried to silence and go after legal workers, threatening the work of
20 organizations like Justice for Our Neighbors. We stand for all of the legal workers and advocates
21 representing immigrants and vulnerable communities.

22 In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." and he
23 reminded us: "The time is always right to do what is right." As Jesus said "I was a stranger and you
24 welcomed me." Matthew 25:35B; and "do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that
25 some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2; "When an alien resides with you in
26 your land, you shall not oppress the alien." Leviticus 19:33.

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1 **Document: 700.03**

2 **Name: Supporting Human Rights Advocacy and the Right to Engage in Nonviolent Actions**
3 **including Boycotts and Free Speech**

4 **Author(s): Methodist Federation for Social Action, Elisa Gatz, Alka Lyall, Luis F. Reyes, co-chairs;**
5 **Paula Roderick, member Broadway UMC.**

6 **CCFA Action:**

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9 **ACTION:**

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11 The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church (“the Conference”):

- 12
13 1. Calls upon its clergy, lay leaders, and members to support the right to engage in nonviolent
14 resistance including the use of boycotts and divestments.
15 2. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and church members, to educate themselves about the damage anti-
16 boycott laws have done to free speech rights and other nonviolent actions;
17 3. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and members to consider the dangers posed by the 2015 Illinois anti-
18 boycott law, that penalizes companies for engaging in actions critical of Israel, even when those
19 actions are taking out of concern for human rights.
20 4. Urges its clergy, lay leaders, and church members, on their own behalf to contact (write, call, or
21 meet) their Illinois State Representatives and Senators to urge them to support the Illinois Human
22 Rights Advocacy Protection Act, H.B. 2723/ S.B. 2462. This legislation would restore
23 protections for peaceful advocacy by repealing the state's 2015 anti-boycott law targeting
24 advocates for Palestinian rights. The 2015 law has had serious consequences for human rights
25 advocacy. The most prominent example came when the state divested from Unilever after Ben &
26 Jerry's, a wholly owned autonomous subsidiary of Unilever, decided to stop selling ice cream in
27 illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories due to human rights concerns. The
28 Human Rights Advocacy Protection Act would also restore protections for peaceful advocacy,
29 remove legal uncertainty for Illinois organizations, realign state law with fundamental democratic
30 principles, and protect civil society's ability to engage on humanitarian issues.
31

32 **RATIONALE:**

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34 In 2005, after years of occupation and oppression, Palestinian civil society issued an urgent cry to the
35 international community to use boycott divestment and sanctions (“BDS”) actions until Israel: 1) provides
36 equal rights to Palestinian/Israeli citizens inside Israel, 2) recognizes the right of return for Palestinian
37 refugees, and 3) ends the occupation of Palestine.
38

39 In recent years, this Palestinian-led movement has garnered international support from churches —
40 including the United Methodist and other denominations - universities and other institutions as it seeks to
41 apply economic pressure on Israel over its treatment of Palestinians.
42

43 United Methodists have a long history of encouraging the use of boycotts or divestment initiatives in
44 efforts to advance the rights of marginalized groups, including in support of the rights of Palestinians to
45 be free from occupation. In 2012 the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution
46 "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land" (#6111)(re-adopted 2016, 2024), which calls on
47 “all nations to prohibit...the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian
48 land,” i.e. calls for an international boycott of products made in the Israeli settlements. Moreover eleven
49 annual conferences, including the NIC, and one jurisdiction have voted specifically to affirm the right to
50 peacefully address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions.
51

1 However, governmental measures such as the current Illinois anti-boycott law impose penalties on
2 citizens and corporations for encouraging support for the rights of Palestinians by engaging in boycotts or
3 divestment. Our current Illinois law is contrary to the spirit and intent of UM and NIC measures to stand
4 up for social justice.¹

5
6 The United Methodist Book of Discipline calls on all Christians to resist unjust governmental interference
7 in the work of the church (The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2016, ¶164B). The UM 2024 GC
8 resolution calling for the Right to Peacefully Address Injustice urged all United Methodists to advocate
9 against the suppression of time-honored and nonviolent means of addressing injustice. Protecting the
10 right to free speech and supporting the Illinois Human Rights Advocacy Protection Act will further the
11 intent to fulfill the call to protect non violent actions including the right to boycott.

¹ Illinois' anti-boycott statute permits a seven-member board to determine that a company is "boycotting" Israel and/or "any territory controlled by Israel," and place that company on the prohibited investment list. In just the past few years, this Board has invoked the statute to threaten Air BnB, Ben and Jerry's, Air Canada.