

50 Faith-Based Groups Join Legal Brief Urging Supreme Court to Overturn Arizona's Anti-Immigrant Law

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As the Supreme Court prepares to take up legal challenges to Arizona's controversial immigration law (SB-1070), more than 50 prominent Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups [including CMSM and LCWR] signed on to an *amicus curiae* brief arguing for suspension of the law.

"People of faith are compelled to oppose unjust laws that fail to uphold the dignity of every human being," said Lisa Sharon Harper, Director of Mobilizing at *Sojourners*. "All people are created in the image of God, and the Arizona law is an assault on that moral reality."

According to the brief, SB-1070 "endangers a large swath of Arizonans" by requiring law enforcement officials to demand that residents provide proof of citizenship. As the brief points out, the law deputizes local police officers as immigration agents, creating a host of legal problems and humanitarian issues.

"This immoral law is turning people of faith into criminals," said Rev. Luis Cortés, president of Esperanza, a prominent Latino evangelical organization. "Laws that promote inhumane treatment of God's children have no place in our country and will lead to civil disobedience. Christ demands that of his followers."

People of faith provided a constant witness at the Arizona Statehouse as SB-1070 was debated, and after its passage they have pressed the courts to dismantle the draconian legislation. Arizona was the first state in the U.S. to pass this type of "attrition through enforcement" anti-immigrant law, and dozens of other states have since taken up similar proposals, which have passed in states such as Alabama and Georgia. Faith leaders in these states have spoken out against these laws that divide communities and separate immigrant families.

"We have seen firsthand the devastating effect of anti-immigrant legislation on all Arizonans, immigrant and non-immigrant alike," said Bishop Minerva Carcaño of the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. "I have confidence that the U.S. Supreme Court will repeal SB 1070. However, even if the Supreme Court is unable to make this right and bold decision, United Methodists in Arizona and across the U.S. will stand firmly and compassionately with our immigrant brothers and sisters."

Signers of the brief expect the Supreme Court to overturn the law, but regardless of the verdict remain focused on the higher law that commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

"As people of faith, we are called to welcome others as God has welcomed us," said Dr. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). "May God move the hearts of our political leaders in the direction of greater hospitality and compassion toward our sisters and brothers in immigrant communities across this nation."

Read the whole brief here: www.nilc.org/document.html?id=641
(full site of all briefs: www.nilc.org/USvAZamici.html).