

February 14, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

The faith community writes today urging all Members of Congress to oppose the Secure and Succeed Act of 2018. This bill combines the harmful provisions in the Secure Act (S.2192) and the Succeed Act (S. 1852) and would dismantle access to family reunification. Faith leaders call on all Members of Congress to reject the Secure and Succeed Act and any bill that would redefine family. It is critical that rather than this harmful bill, bipartisan legislation such as the Dream Act (S.1615) be enacted. Another bipartisan bill, the USA Act (S. 2367), is a compromise solution that would provide dreamers with a pathway to citizenship and authorize funds for data-driven border technology.

While the Secure and Succeed Act would provide a 12-year opportunity to seek U.S. citizenship for undocumented individuals who arrived in the United States before they were 16 years old, based on previous versions of this bill, it would mandate gravely disproportional consequences that would result in immediate deportation. For example, young people who need to take a year off of school or who lose their job and can't find another within a year would see their protection unfairly revoked — for situations with which many young people today are familiar. It would also force undocumented individuals to sign away their due process rights - without the ability to have their case heard before an immigration judge.

This bill would also permanently ban families from reuniting in the United States, rather than remedying existing prolonged family separation at the hands of a burdensome system. We reject the redefinition of the “nuclear” family because we know siblings, adult children, and adult parents are all critical members of a family. The bill would keep U.S. citizens from sponsoring their siblings, and would bar green card holders (lawful permanent residents) from sponsoring their children over the age of 18. It would also make it nearly impossible for U.S. citizens to reunite with their parents, by replacing the permanent visa category currently in place with a 5-year renewable visa that would require private healthcare coverage and bar work authorization and an opportunity for permanent status or citizenship. Already, family-based visas are very limited: a U.S. citizen can only sponsor their spouse, child, parent, and sibling; and a green card holder can only sponsor their spouse and child. The bill would also eliminate the Diversity Visa Lottery program, which has been essential to immigrants from all over the world, women in particular.

The Secure and Succeed Act would add \$25 billion to increase Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and other deportation and border enforcement mechanisms. The United States already has robust border security measures in place, spending more than \$18 billion on immigration enforcement every year, more than all other federal law enforcement agencies combined. This includes drones, mobile surveillance systems, video surveillance towers, 11,000

underground sensors, 700 miles of fencing, Blackhawk helicopters, and 18,127 border patrol agents at the southern border alone. The dramatic militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border region has also stifled the economic vitality and overall well-being of U.S. border communities. Additional border wall construction would only harm American communities, businesses, and landowners.

Instead of the Secure and Succeed Act, the family community urges all Members of Congress to support the bipartisan Dream Act (S.1615/H.R. 3440). Another bipartisan proposal, the Uniting and Securing America (USA) Act (S. 2367/ H.R.4796), introduced by Senators McCain (R-AZ) and Coons (D-DE) and Representatives Hurd (R-TX) and Aguilar (D-CA), would offer a path to citizenship for dreamers and authorize funding for data-driven border technology. The USA Act would also address the root causes of forced migration by authorizing \$1.04 billion in fiscal year 2018 for El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to strengthen the rule of law, combat corruption and narcotics trafficking, and address underlying causes of poverty. Children, families, women, and men are fleeing violence, gang conscription, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation in these countries. Since 2005, in Honduras alone, murders of women and girls have increased by 346 percent, and murders of men and boys have grown by 292 percent. Because of this, the USA Act is a step toward a more long-term approach to responding to conditions that compel migration.

Our faith communities urge Congress to enact a real solution that offers a pathway to citizenship for as many dreamers as possible without compromising family unity or other immigrant communities. Using the desperation of immigrant youth to push through destructive policies that undermine other immigrant and border communities violates our values and fails to promote the common good. We also ask you to remember that any legislative solution must honor the core tenets of human dignity and family unity.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dominican Sisters  
African American Ministers In Action  
Alliance of Baptists  
American Baptist Home Mission Societies  
American Friends Service Committee  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Bread for the World  
Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph  
Christian Community Development Association  
Church World Service  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Conference of the Presentation Sisters  
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
Conventual Franciscan Friars - Province of Our Lady of Consolation  
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, WI  
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Advocacy Office  
Faith In Public Life  
Franciscan Action Network

Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, US Area  
Franciscans for Justice  
Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)  
Ignatian Solidarity Network  
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
Islamic Society of North America  
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Ladysmith Servite Sisters  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Justice for Our Neighbors  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment  
Pax Christi USA  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
School Sisters of Notre Dame - Central Pacific Province  
School Sisters of Notre Dame Cooperative Investment Fund  
Sisters of Bon Secours USA  
Sisters of Charity, BVM  
Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, USA Province  
Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Placid Priory  
Sisters of St. Dominic/Racine Dominicans  
Sisters of the Presentation  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
The Episcopal Church  
The Third Order Society of St. Francis, Province of the Americas  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Trinity Health  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
UURISE - Unitarian Universalist Refugee & Immigrant Services & Education