

Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) Summer Action Grassroots Toolkit

RESPECTING THE DIGNITY OF ALL: DEFUND THE DETENTION AND DEPORTATION MACHINE

JULY/AUGUST 2017

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Tell Congress: No Funds for Exclusionary, Enforcement Only Policies

President Trump issued multiple executive orders that target immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and Muslims. His administration is seeking to significantly expand the immigration deportation force by tripling the number of Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, increasing militarization at the U.S. border, and expanding immigration detention. Through the President's executive orders, the administration is furthering an exclusionist agenda that does not represent the welcoming communities across the United States. As people of faith, we are called to stand against these discriminatory policies. Together we can make a difference.

President Trump is now asking Congress for billions over and above last year's funding for immigration enforcement, at the expense of vital and life-saving refugee resettlement, education, housing, and nutritional assistance programs that promote public safety and alleviate poverty. Members of Congress can use their "power of the purse" to ensure that programs that provide job training for people across the country aren't cut to expand immigration enforcement, separate families, or detain children. Now is our chance to tell our Members of Congress to live up to our values and act with moral authority.

What is President Trump requesting?

President Trump's budget requests an additional **\$4.5 billion** to unnecessarily fuel immigration enforcement expansion, a **23% increase** over immigration enforcement spending in 2016. The request would exponentially increase the number of immigrants languishing in unjust detention and waste billions on a costly and dangerous expansion of immigration enforcement and border militarization.

At the same time, President Trump has proposed to gut critical refugee accounts that are necessary for protecting and serving refugees and other vulnerable population domestically and internationally. Trump has proposed a **\$218 million, or 31%, cut** to domestic refugee resettlement programs. The President's budget request also comes at the expense, a 59% decrease, of programs that assist low-income and middle-income families.

Take Action: Make Sure Your Members of Congress Hear from You

Congress is preparing the budget for next year, and it needs to pass the House and Senate. Members of Congress need to hear from concerned constituents throughout the summer in order to stand strong against funding exclusionary and enforcement-only policies. You can:

1. **Attend town halls and public events** with your Members of Congress to make your voice heard (July 3-9)
2. **Call and tweet your Members of Congress** and request visits from their local offices (July 10-14). *Don't forget to build your advocacy team from July 24-28!*
3. **Write** an opinion editorial or letter to the editor to your local media outlets in support of funding that protects immigrants and refugees (July 17-21).
4. **Host a vigil, rally, or public event** that showcases support for immigrants and refugees in your community (July 31 - August 11)
5. **Meet** with your Member of Congress over August recess (August 14-31)

[Please tell us if you take action!](#)

July 3-9: Attend Town Halls & Local Public Events

Town halls and local public events that your members of Congress host when they are home are a great opportunity to hear directly from your member of Congress, and for them to hear from you! Here are some tips to help you make the most of it.

Asking Questions at Town Halls:

Introduce yourself.

Include your name, your city, and your state. You may also want to say how long you've lived in the area or your profession.

Thank your member for being there.

It's especially important when the town hall might be tense—it makes them much more receptive to your question.

Tell a brief story.

Make sure the congressperson understands that this is personal to their district.

Make a clear, direct ask.

Make it as hard as possible for them to avoid the question, and get them on the record agreeing to take a concrete action.

Here's an example of what to ask:

- "President Trump's budget request called for a 66% increase in immigrant detention. Can I count on you to push back and push for a reduction in all immigrant detention?"
- "President Trump's budget slashes international and domestic programs that serve refugees, trafficking survivors, and other vulnerable or low-income populations. What will you do protect funding for these programs?"

Follow up!

Get staff contact information while you're there, and reach out to make sure the member knows you will be watching to make sure they follow through.

Tips:

- Get there early.
- Practice your introduction, story, and question. In many cases, you'll have two minutes or less to speak.

[Find a town hall or public event near you.](#)

July 10 IIC Webinar: 5 Ways We Can Defund the Deportation Machine

Please join on **Monday July 10th at 4 PM ET and 1 PM PT** for the IIC Webinar on 5 Ways to Defund the Deportation Machine.

It's time for a congressional intervention. President Trump has requested billions of dollars for indiscriminate deportations of community members and an unprecedented number of immigrants in detention. Unless they hear a resounding NO from their constituents, members of Congress are poised to develop a budget that expands immigration enforcement and slashes programs that protect the most vulnerable.

We have an opportunity to let the prophetic voice ring out and empower our legislators to resist a budget designed to escalate the attack on our neighbors who are immigrants and refugees. Join the Interfaith Immigration Coalition for a webinar on **Five Ways We Can Defund the Deportation Machine** together. We will walk you through tangible actions you can take each week from July through August so that Congress hears from communities of faith loudly and boldly throughout the summer.

1. **Attend town halls and public events** with your Members of Congress to make your voice heard
2. **Call and tweet your Members of Congress** and request visits from their local offices
3. **Write** an opinion editorial or letter to the editor in support of funding that protects immigrants and refugees
4. **Meet** with your Member of Congress over August recess
5. **Host a vigil, rally, or public event** that showcases support for immigrants and refugees in your community

To join the visual portion go to: <http://join.me/faith4immigration>

To join the audio portion please call: +1 (202) 602-1295 and enter the conference ID: 354-977-836#

You can also follow the directions on the screen to join by phone.

July 10-14: Call and Tweet Your Members of Congress & Request Visits from their Local Offices

TELL CONGRESS: Protect Funding for Refugee Assistance & Resettlement and Reduce Funding for Immigration Detention, Deportation & Border Militarization

Background: President Trump's FY18 [budget request](#) would significantly cut funds for refugee assistance overseas and resettlement in the United States, while unnecessarily ballooning an already bloated immigration detention and deportation force and further militarizing border communities. Congress has the "power of the purse" and can reject this proposal. It is critical that Senators and Representatives hear from us as constituents who stand with refugees and immigrants.

Trump's budget proposes a 31% cut to refugee resettlement programs that support local schools and successfully help refugees find employment, as well as drastic cuts to international assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. At the same time, Trump is requesting \$4.5 billion in additional funding to expand his deportation force to tear families and communities apart, detain an unprecedented 51,379 people, and further militarize communities living along the southern U.S. border. See more resources from the IIC [here](#).

Congress must robustly fund refugee assistance overseas and the U.S. refugee resettlement program, at minimum at last year's levels, and reduce funding for mass immigration detention, deportation, and border militarization.

CALL YOUR SENATORS & REPRESENTATIVES TODAY: 1-866-961-4293

Please call 3 times to connect with your Representative and both of your Senators

Sample Script: "I'm your constituent from [CITY/TOWN], and I urge you to protect refugee assistance and resettlement from the cuts proposed in Trump's budget request. Please also reduce funding for detention, deportation and border militarization, which only tear families and communities apart. My community welcomes refugees and immigrants, and I urge you to reflect the best of our American values of compassion, hospitality, and welcome."

Feel free to share a personal story about standing in solidarity with refugees and immigrants.

For interfaith organizational statements on President Trump's FY18 budget request, please click [here](#).

[Please tell us if you take action!](#)

Follow [@InterfaithImm](#) on Twitter and "like" the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) on Facebook to receive up-to-date alerts.

How to Request Visits with your Members' Local Offices:

To schedule a congressional advocacy visit in-district, you need to reach out to your member of Congress' scheduler. Call their D.C. office to find out who that is; you can find the contact information for all of your congressional offices at fcnl.org/congress.

Once you have the contact information of the scheduler, send them an email. Here's a sample- make sure to edit the parts in italics to be about you and your group.

Sample Meeting Request

Dear *Scheduler*,

I am writing to request a visit with Rep./Sen. *Name* in-district during the week of August 14-31 at their *closest to you* office to discuss funding for immigration enforcement, detention, and refugee resettlement domestically and assistance abroad.

A group of constituents, representing *professional affiliations of group members* would like to meet with the *Representative/Senator* to talk about the impact this funding will have on our community.

Please let me know as soon as you can about Rep./Sen. *Name's* availability August 14-31. Thank you for your time and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Name

profession

Religious community/organizations/affiliation if applicable

City, State, Zip Code

List of other Delegation Members

Please only make one visit request per group. You don't want the scheduler to get confused or overwhelmed!

See page 9 of this toolkit to learn more about building a team for an in-district congressional visit.

[For a video with a step-by-step tutorial of how to schedule an in-district advocacy visit click here!](#)

If you are setting up an interfaith advocacy visit, event, vigil, submitting an op-ed or otherwise engaged over this summer [Please tell us if you take action!](#)

July 17-21: Write Opinion Editorials & Letters to the Editor for Local Media Outlets

Publishing opinion editorials (op-eds) and letters to the editor (LTEs) are a great way to get the attention of your Members of Congress. But first, you need to write a piece that tells your story – not just the facts.

How to Engage the Media:

- **Respond to Recent Reports**

Find a news article or story that relates to the issue. Make sure you are responding to a recent story or topic – no more than a few days old.

- **Ask for Action**

Make a specific ask to specific policymakers. Mentioning your Members of Congress by name is an important way to make sure they see it.

- **Find the Facts**

Illustrate your argument with one or two facts with citations. Statistics can be helpful in moderation, but too many statistics can be confusing.

- **Tie It Together**

Bring in your personal connection or moral approach to the issue. State your connections to the community as they are relevant to the points you're making.

Tips for Submitting Op-Eds or LTEs:

Keep it short: Newspapers are most likely to publish letters to the editor that are short and make one succinct point (that is supported with facts or quotes from validators!). Check the newspaper you're submitting to for a word limit. If you can't find a limit, keep it to 150 words or fewer for LTEs or 750 words or fewer for op-eds.

Write from your own voice: Your piece is more likely to be published if it comes from your voice. Don't be afraid to tell your story and to appeal to the audience from the heart as well as the head.

Submit it to the newspaper: Submit the letter directly to the newspaper (most newspapers have an online submissions page) and follow up by phone or email if you don't get a response within a week or two. Put the letter in the body of the email to make it easy for the editorial staff to read. As you submit your letter, don't miss an opportunity to build a relationship with staff. To find local newspapers and submit your piece, visit: <http://act.fcni.org/lte/lte/>.

Report Back: If you're published, email a link to hannah@fcni.org so we can track the impact. Also, make sure to call and email your Members of Congress to continue the conversation.

Sample Letter to the Editor #1:

Members of Congress are home from Washington this week to visit with constituents, spend time with family, and partake in Independence Day festivities. I hope that while they are home they take the time to reflect on how the United States – and Glen Mills, PA in particular – can continue to be a welcoming community for immigrants and refugees.

As a person of faith, I want my tax dollars to reflect a shared faithful call to love my neighbor, welcome the stranger, and care for the sojourner. Unfortunately, President Trump’s budget request runs counter to this vision by cutting programs that assist low and middle-income people to fund unnecessary immigration enforcement. We must not close the door on those most in need by slashing refugee resettlement and assistance funding. Our community is home to many immigrants awaiting long overdue congressional reform – Congress should reject spending billions of dollars to tear families apart through unjust detention and deportation.

Congress faces a critical choice while they develop the budget for our nation. I hope that I count on Senator Toomey, Senator Casey, and Representative Meehan to choose community over exclusion. I hope they will reduce funding for deportation and detention in 2018 and instead robustly fund refugee resettlement in the U.S. and assistance abroad.

Sample Letter to the Editor #2:

I’m proud of the Nashville Metro Council for advancing legislation that would protect more members of our community from unjust deportation and detention practices, as reported in the June 20 article, “Controversial immigration measures move forward in Nashville’s Metro Council.” I hope that Senator Alexander, Senator Corker, and Representative Cooper will take heed and work on the federal level to reflect the welcoming Nashville community.

As a person of faith, I want my tax dollars to reflect a shared faithful call to love my neighbor, welcome the stranger, and care for the sojourner. Unfortunately, President Trump’s budget request runs counter to this vision by cutting programs that assist low and middle-income people to fund unnecessary immigration enforcement. Congress should reject this budget which would further exclusionist policies. We must not close the door on those most in need by slashing refugee resettlement and assistance funding, and Congress should cease spending billions of dollars to tear families apart through unjust detention and deportation.

Congress faces a critical choice while they develop the budget for our nation. I urge our congressional leaders to reduce funding for deportation and detention in 2018 and instead robustly fund refugee resettlement in the U.S. and assistance abroad.

Sample Opinion Editorial:

TITLE

Last week, I joined a group of faith leaders, immigrant neighbors, and other community members. Though we met as strangers, we left as friends, united in our dream to make our community one that welcomes people from all backgrounds.

While some have stood against immigrants from backgrounds that may be different than theirs, my experience has shown me that our differences are what make us a stronger and more diverse as a community. *(Details about event should be around 250-400 words. Include personal stories, lessons learned, and your thoughts/experience).*

As a community leader, I urge every member of our community to participate in similar events and challenge the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in our country. As residents of a country founded on the hard work, determination, and skills of generations of immigrants from all countries, religions, and backgrounds, we must not let our differences divide us, but instead strengthen us. Exclusionary mindsets will only lead to fear and hostility, neither of which have any place in our community.

Love will always overcome hate and as a member of this community, I am ready to stand alongside people of all backgrounds and faith traditions so that we can build communities of acceptance, inclusivity, and welcome.

[Please tell us if you submit an Op-Ed or LTE!](#)

July 24-28: Build Your Advocacy Team

Start Planning your Neighbor to Neighbor In District Visit:

When Members of Congress know that their constituents care about immigrant and refugee rights, they vote accordingly. Establishing and nurturing relationships with your Senators and Representatives is crucial to enacting immigration policies that protect and affirm the rights of immigrants and refugees, and also to stopping proposals - like President Trump's budget proposal - that would negatively impact these communities.

Every Senator and Representative has an office – often multiple offices – in their home state. They work from these local offices during "congressional recess," making it convenient for your voice to be heard. **They will be home the entire month of August, and it's important to request visits with the Member of Congress early!** During recess you may even be able to meet with your Member of Congress in person.

Get a team together: A team ideally includes faith leaders from different traditions, people whose lives have been directly impacted by the immigration system, people who volunteer or work teaching English or resettling refugees, etc. Be strategic in finding team members and community leaders who best represent your community's call for just immigration policies that foster welcoming communities and whom the Member may already know or respect. Your team should commit to building an ongoing relationship with the office. Aim for 5-10 participants, though a larger group can be a powerful sign of support. Check with the scheduler to see how many people their office can accommodate and be sure to plan well, so that you are focused on your message and everyone knows their specific roles.

Learn about who represents your community in Congress: Go to www.house.gov and www.senate.gov to find out which Members of Congress represent you and your surrounding community. Their websites and a "Google" search will show how they have voted before and what they have said about immigration reform, as well as biographical sketches, campaign statements, past occupations, religion, political and social memberships, areas of interest and positions on other issues, all of which can inform your approach to the meeting.

Have a plan: Meet with the other participants to assign roles, including the facilitator, the personal story, specific points, and the "ask." Practice by role-playing before the meeting so that everyone feels comfortable and knows what to do. Review your talking points and prepare your materials. In order to show the broad support of faith communities, consider bringing the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition's Platform](http://interfaithimmigration.org/neighbor), which outlines the types of positive reform faith communities seek. You may also want to include other materials, such as media clips of local events and fact sheets showing the faith community's support for positive immigration policies. The most current leave-behind resources can be found at: <http://interfaithimmigration.org/neighbor>.

Roles:

The Facilitator will kick off the meeting by introducing the group, explaining the purpose for the meeting, and providing space for each person to briefly introduce themselves. The facilitator will also jump in if the meeting goes off-track and redirect the conversation.

The Personal Story is key to every meeting. Someone should be present who has either been directly impacted by the broken immigration system, or has worked closely with individuals who have been separated from family members, detained, or deported. Telling these stories will show how people's lives are impacted and how your community would benefit from positive immigration legislation, as well as the negative consequences of proposed anti-immigrant bills.

Point People on Specific Issues: There will be specific issues your group will want to discuss, which you should decide while planning the meeting. Visit the IIC website for most up to date [resources](#) and [policy briefs](#) for guidance on issues to emphasize.

The Ask is the critical part of the visit when you ask for the Member of Congress to support positive reforms and defend against proposals that would adversely affect immigrant and refugee communities. Listen carefully and ask for clarification if what they say is vague.

Schedule a meeting: Call your Member's local office to request a meeting (local office numbers can be found on their websites). Make sure to tell them how many other faith leaders and community members would like to attend. If the member is unavailable, ask to meet with staff who work on immigration issues. You may have to send an email or fill out a form. Don't be discouraged if you need to follow-up for a response.

Members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition may be able to support you in setting up visits and connecting you with other people in district if you are having trouble.

[Please tell us if you are setting up a visit!](#)

July 31 - August 11: Host Interfaith Vigils

Don't forget to invite your Member of Congress!

Host an Interfaith Vigil

Hosting interfaith vigils provides the opportunity for faith leaders to express how welcoming immigrants is part of all faith traditions, reflecting on the deep scriptural and spiritual roots of our work to support refugees and immigrants. Even small events, multiplied across the country, will send a powerful message to the Administration and Congress that welcoming immigrants and refugees is moral issue that is important to people of faith and conscience.

Steps to a successful prayer vigil:

- Coordinate a public prayer vigil with faith leaders, immigrants' rights groups, refugee resettlement agencies, immigrant leaders, community members, and if possible local elected leaders.
- Identify the core leaders and speakers, make sure there are impacted people, including undocumented individuals and Muslim organizations who are invited to help plan and speak at the event.
- Consider inviting elected officials including Representatives, Senators, City Council Members, or the Mayor.
- Be clear about your goals, what you want to accomplish, and how many people you hope will join the event.
- Identify the best location for the vigil, which is generally somewhere central in a symbolic memorial, state capitol, park or city hall. We are encouraging all to have the vigil be at or near the member of Congress' local office.
- Apply for any permits needed for the location; reserve or order any equipment you'll need such as microphones, cameras, banners, candles, projectors; and make sure you can access electrical outlets.
- Choose a time of day best for attendance and media -- most news reports take place at 5-6 PM and 9-10 PM, so a few hours before those time blocks is best for press events.
- Promote the event through social media, public service announcement, flyers, websites, and congregation bulletins.
- Agree on messaging and talking points.
- Bring signs that are consistent with your messaging and agreed upon ahead of time
- Assign specific talking points to each speaker and ensure they have time limits.
- Invite the media by issuing a media advisory and following up with a press release after the event.
- Invite participants at the vigil to be part of further action and advocacy by writing and calling the White House and their Representatives and Senators.
- If you are able to get a wide range of organizations together, you could hold a 24 or 48 hour vigil outside the office of your Senator or Representative. Create a spreadsheet to sign up each organization with 2 hour blocks of time.

The set-up for the vigil should ensure that all faiths are respected and welcomed with awareness and consciousness. Drawing on the faith traditions and rituals can make vigils much more powerful, raising the creative and dramatic tension.

- Ask clergy attending to wear collars, stoles, robes and any other appropriate religious attire.
- Foot-washing of individuals impacted by immigration policies.
- Procession with candles to symbolic location.
- A Prayer Wall with handwritten prayers for immigrants and refugees.
- Lift up stories in sacred texts.
- Highlight passages in scripture and present to Members of Congress.
- Collect and deliver prayers to your Senators and Representatives.
- Make visuals – photos, drawings, art, etc., that show the consequences of the Trump administration’s actions and policies.
- If you want to do a 24 or 48 hour vigil make a signup sheet and assign 2 hour time slots to each organization involved.

Sample Vigil Program:

Welcome—a few words about the focus and purpose of your vigil. Why now? What’s the concern? Who’s affected? How can this vigil convince your members of congress to support refugees and immigrants? What values shape your faith traditions’ response to these concerns? This may take the form of brief comments from one of your speakers, or a welcome and an opening prayer.

Music- Invite local musicians who share similar values to join your vigil, you can have them do one or two songs throughout the program. Choose songs that are connected to the cause, or songs that everyone knows and can sing along.

Opening Prayer—Ask clergy or key lay leader to open with a prayer Song—A singer, choir or instrumentalist can perform, or a few singers can lead participants in singing. Reading—for ideas see suggested readings below.

Speaker—A personal story from a local community member of how the outdated and unjust immigration system has impacted families. More than one story can be integrated throughout the program as well. Creative Ritual: Integrate creative symbols or rituals from faith traditions that draw more attention to the importance of immigration reform (see above suggestions)

Prayer—One person may lead the prayers, or you might invite several faith leaders to pray according to their traditions. Involve vigil participants in praying a refrain throughout your prayer time, or pray in a circle so everyone has the opportunity to pray. Consider offering prayers in multiple languages.

Song & Closing—reiterate the focus and purpose of your vigil, and send participants off with a call to welcome newcomers and raise their voices in the public sphere to stop the deportations. Consider a procession or march to another symbolic and strategic location.

Sample Invite to Your Member of Congress:

Dear Honorable Senator / Representative,

Thank you for your support of refugees and immigrants over the years.

We would like to invite you to attend [ORGANIZATION/ COALITION]'s prayer vigil/ press conference on [DATE] at [LOCATION] along with faith leaders and civic leaders who are speaking out against the deportations that separating families.

We would be honored to have presence as a speaker at this press conference/ vigil. Other speakers include [list 2-3 top speakers] Please let us know as soon as you can if you are able to attend by contacting me at [email]. If you are able to be there we will connect about the details on messaging and agenda.

Sincerely,

Spreading the Word on Welcome: Media Resources

If you have planned an event such as a dinner, panel discussion, project, interfaith vigil, or weekly service, we encourage you to reach out and invite members of the media. Look online at the local publications or outlets you would like in attendance and search for past articles on immigration or refugees, then consider pitching your event to reporters who frequently cover those issues or other community issues if there is not a designated immigration or refugee reporter.

Consider inviting the editorial director at your local newspaper. By inviting members of the press, you will be able to further share our message of welcoming to a larger audience and also inspire local media to cover immigration and refugee issues more frequently in a positive way that highlights broad community support for immigrants, refugees, and resettlement.

To invite multiple members of the press, send a media advisory at least two full business days ahead of the event. Ideally, send the media advisory one week before the event and then again the day before your event.

Please see the draft pitch email for media invitation, as well as the media advisory below.

Draft Pitch Email for Media Invitation and Follow Up from Advisory

Hello,

I hope you are well! I wanted to let you know of a potential story opportunity in regards to the continued debate over refugee resettlement and immigration enforcement funding and the ongoing response from communities in CITY/STATE. On DATE, ORGANIZATION will host a welcoming vigil with immigrants, refugees, and people of faith.

In light of the continued and heated political debate over refugee resettlement, and the ongoing discussions about deportation and detention funding we would like to highlight the human stories behind the resettlement program and immigrants in our community, particularly how families and faith communities are impacted by these policies and our commitment to restoring welcome. Given your past articles highlighting refugees and immigrants in our communities, I would love to offer you an exclusive interview with the group next DATE if you are interested!

I have attached the invitation flyer to this email with a full list of individuals in the group, but please let me know if you are interested or if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Draft Media Advisory

DATE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

NAME, PHONE NUMBER

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

Date of Event, Time, Location

Local (Faith Groups/Community Groups) Hosts (Vigil/Rally/Event) to Welcome Immigrants and Refugees in (Name of Town)

Your City Name, State Abbreviation – As the (City/Town Name) community seeks to meaningfully respond to the global refugee crisis and welcome all immigrants and refugees into our community, leaders from (Organization/Congregation) will host (event type) to show support for welcoming refugees and immigrants. They will be joined by refugees from (country), immigrants impacted by deportation or detention, and (list other special guests, especially clergy or elected officials). Participants will discuss how refugees and immigrants positively impact the community, and our hope that Congress will robustly fund resettlement, assistance abroad, and defund deportation and detention. All participants will be available for interviews before and after the event.

WHAT: Event type with faith and community leaders to welcome immigrants and refugees

WHERE: Address of event

WHEN: Date and time of event

SPEAKERS: List of all speakers and their titles

DETAILS: Add event details such as security (if applicable), special visuals (religious symbols, art pieces, etc.), or any other important event information.

###

Please tell us if you are setting up an interfaith vigil/event so that we can track out impact around the country.

August 14-31: Advocacy Visits with Your Members of Congress in their Local Offices

During the Visit:

Introductions

The Facilitator should start the meeting by thanking the Member for their time, introducing the group as a whole, and then having each person introduce themselves. Each participant should say the faith community they represent to show the power of the group.

Personal Story

Someone should share a story about why Members of Congress should reduce funding for detention and deportation and robustly fund refugee resettlement and assistance abroad.

Make the Ask

Our community welcomes refugees and immigrants, and I urge you to reflect the best of our American values of compassion, hospitality, and welcome. Can we count on you to protect refugee assistance and resettlement from the cuts proposed in Trump's budget request and work to reduce funding for detention, deportation and border militarization? In addition, given the administration's refugee and Muslim ban executive order and the recent Supreme Court decision, I urge you to do everything you can to hold the administration accountable and ensure the U.S. government is continuing the robust resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees.

When they answer, listen well and take notes. While they may not agree with you on all these issues, try to find common ground to continue to work together on. You'll likely not convince them to change their mind in one meeting, but you can intentionally build a relationship that can transform their perspective and stance. Much of advocacy involves listening, and providing opportunities for the member to share their priorities and concerns and ask questions. Look for indications of the members' views, and finding opportunities to provide helpful information or correct misinformation. Members and staff will appreciate the chance to be heard instead of only being talked at. Ask questions and engage in conversation. Answer questions honestly. If you don't know the answer, say that you don't know but you will find out. Assign one person in the group to follow up.

Thank You & Invitation

Thank them and invite them to an upcoming prayer vigil, service, or event you are planning. Offer to be a resource to them, and remember to get the staffers' business cards. Consider asking them to take a photo with your group – most politicians love the photo opportunity!

After the Visit:

Debrief the Meeting

It's important to make sure you and your group are on the same page immediately after leaving the meeting, while the conversation is fresh in your mind. Make sure to leave the office building, so your debrief conversation won't be overheard. As a group, review: What did we hear? Did we get what we wanted? What are the next steps? It's also important to evaluate your group's work. How did we do as a

team? Share the information learned during your meeting with your state coalition, immigrants' rights groups, and other allies.

Follow Up with your Member of Congress

Choose one person to send a follow up email thanking the Member or staff for their time, attaching the documents mentioned, providing answers to questions that came up during the meeting, and continuing to engage the Member and staff in your group's work. You can once again make your case against negative proposals and support for positive immigration legislation, and inviting them to an upcoming event.

Call Washington, DC

The local and Washington, DC offices may not communicate about visits, so it's important to follow up with the DC office as well. The Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 can connect you to the DC offices of your Senators and Representative. Introduce yourself as a constituent and ask for the staffer who works on immigration. Tell them about your meeting with their local office, and ask what they are doing to support positive reforms and defend against proposals that would adversely affect immigrant and refugee communities.

Tell Us How Your Visit Went!

It's very important for us know about where members stand on immigration reform. After you meet or speak with someone from your Member's local and/or DC offices, please fill out this form: goo.gl/1197BJ or go to <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/neighbor>. Advocates in DC will then follow up with the DC staff to reinforce your visit and answer any specific questions about legislative proposals. We will also share with you what we are hearing from their DC staff.

Thank you for making these important visits. Please feel free to contact anyone in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition about how we can be supportive of your work. A list of member organizations and contacts can be found at www.interfaithimmigration.org/about/organizations and www.interfaithimmigration.org/about/contact-information.

Please tell us if you are setting up an interfaith advocacy visit so that we can track out impact around the country.

You can print the following page out to leave with your member of Congress and their staff.



Congress: Don't Fund Deportation and Detention, Invest in Community and Protection

President Trump has requested billions of dollars more from Congress to hire more immigration enforcement and border patrol agents, permanently expand immigrant detention - including for women, children, and asylum seekers - further militarize bi-national and indigenous border communities, and build costly and ineffectual additional border wall infrastructure. At the same time, he has proposed slashing refugee resettlement and international assistance for displaced persons. As people of faith, we are called to stand against this kind of wasteful and discriminatory spending.

» **Congress should invest in long term solutions rather than endless enforcement.** Any funding for agents, detention beds, and border militarization means permanent, expensive changes to the immigration enforcement machinery and billions of dollars spent without addressing the problem: a punitive, outdated immigration system. We call upon Congress to develop bipartisan, comprehensive reform that will offer lasting and real solutions on immigration and fund international programs that help address the root causes of migration.

» **Further fueling the deportation machine and slamming the door for people in need does not represent welcoming communities across the United States.** We invite Members of Congress to live up to our nation's values and act with moral authority. During the worst displacement crisis in history, the U.S. must demonstrate leadership by robustly funding refugee resettlement and support for vulnerable populations in the U.S. and funding humanitarian assistance overseas.

» **Funding for endless enforcement comes at the expense of vital community programs.** Education, housing, and nutritional assistance programs promote public safety and alleviate poverty. Poverty-focused international assistance reduces the need for people to have to migrate. Any funding for enforcement reduces funding for these critical programs. Congress has an opportunity to ensure billions of dollars don't go toward expanding the deportation machine, separating families, or detaining children, and instead are invested in our collective future.

Please reduce funding for endless immigration enforcement and detention in FY18 and instead robustly fund refugee resettlement in the U.S. and assistance abroad.

interfaithimmigration.org

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July 2017