

January 23, 2006

**Resolution by the Session of Nassau Presbyterian Church
Proposed by the Mission Committee
Developed by the Immigration Subcommittee
First Reading:
Adopted:**

To The Nassau Presbyterian Church Community,

Recognizing that the Session speaks to and not for the congregation, with this resolution the Session of Nassau Presbyterian Church calls upon the members of our congregation to engage faithfully in study and dialogue related to the impact of our Christian faith on current opinions and policies related to world events.

RESOLUTION

Our Christian faith directs us to welcome our brothers and sisters with love and compassion. Millions of immigrants come to this country every year to support themselves and their families and to build better lives for their children. These immigrants and their families suffer severe deprivation in their home countries due to harsh economic and political conditions. The Human Development Index prepared by the United Nations Development Program indicates that these migrants most often do not have political freedom or access to education, health care and other basic aspects of a decent standard of living in their home countries. The World Bank calculations of the income in the home countries of these immigrants place their living standards, as measured in “purchasing power parity” in international dollars, at a level approximately one-tenth of that enjoyed by the median income family in the United States. The vast majority of these immigrants have the work ethic, trustworthiness, commitment to values and dedication to family that are respected and valued in this country. Their children deserve an education and an opportunity for legal productive employment. The education

and experience of immigrant children is the best hope for changes that would improve living conditions in their home countries. There are currently an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States who are contributing to the United States economy and providing a needed workforce integrated into our daily lives. Immigrants trying to enter the United States without documentation have died in the desert and in transit containers. Indentured servitude and slave-labor conditions for undocumented migrants are increasing in the United States. Human trafficking succeeds because of the powerlessness and undocumented status of these immigrants.

Since 1947, the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States [the present PC(USA) and its predecessors, the NPCNA, PCUS & PCUSA] have repeatedly and consistently spoken out in favor of immigration policies that are welcoming, just and humane toward refugees from political and/or economic injustice and/or oppression. Among these were:

- ◆ a 1947 call for "opening up immigration".
- ◆ the 1953 call for ". . . Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization Policy commence public hearings . . ." looking toward ". . . swift enactment of legislation that is wholesomely American. . .".
- ◆ the 1981 statements: "Mexican immigrants reveal our divided mind about immigrants. They are denounced as illegal, yet eagerly sought as workers. They are sent back . . . with one hand, and recruited back . . . with the other." "They are regarded as both burden and benefit." "The only boundaries Christians recognize ultimately are those established by justice and love."
- ◆ the 1990 statement: "Any immigration policy must (1) provide for the

human needs of refugees and immigrants; (2) assure non-discriminatory humanitarian aid and application laws and policies; (3) uphold full constitutional rights for refugees and immigrants as well as U.S. citizens; (4) protect the lives of persons; (5) give special consideration to the needs of women, children, individuals with special needs and the unification of families; (6) insure provision of adequate resources . . . to communities in order to reduce possibilities of conflict between immigrant groups and . . . U.S. citizens; and (7) combat vigorously any expression of racism either in policies or the implementation of them."

◆ the 2004 "Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the United States".

Several alternative comprehensive immigration reform bills, and several special topic bills that could significantly impact the lives of these illegal aliens and their children, have been introduced in to Congress during this and previous Sessions, and it is anticipated that Congress will act either in the current Session or in the near future to enact a comprehensive immigration reform bill.

Now, therefore, it is resolved by the Session of Nassau Presbyterian Church, meeting on _____, 2005:

First, that this Session strongly urges the Congress and the President of the United States to enact and sign into law immigration legislation that would

◆ provide a means by which law abiding and economically productive undocumented workers currently living in the United States could apply for and achieve legalization of their status;

- ◆ create a guest worker program which a) allows legal entry to qualified applicants, b) provides a pathway to permanent residency and eventual citizenship for qualified quest workers, with special attention to family unification and c) protects both guest workers and citizens by providing legally admitted guest workers the same rights and protections as enjoyed by citizen employees;

- ◆ give the children of undocumented workers who have attended high school in any state the opportunity for higher education at public colleges and universities within that state at tuition rates equal to the rates paid by citizen student.

Second, that this Session, in keeping with the above, specifically opposes the intent and tenor of legislation such as

- ◆ H.R. 3137 (the CLEAR Act of 2005) that makes undocumented status a felony and requires state and local law enforcement officials to enforce immigration law;

- ◆ S. 1438 and H.R. 3333 (the Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act of 2005 and REAL GUEST Act of 2005) that prohibit legalization for current undocumented workers and eventual citizenship for future guest workers.

- ◆ H.R. 4437 (the Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005) that would criminalize unlawful presence; significantly limit judicial review and due process protections for aliens, permanent residents, and U.S. citizens; expand criminal liability to reach family members, employers, and immigrant advocates; increase mandatory detention; place unrealistic and counterproductive restrictions on naturalization; and militarize the border.

Third, that this Session, in keeping with the above, specifically supports the intent and tenor of legislation such as

◆ S. 1033/H.R. 2330 (the Senate and House versions of the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005) that (in the words of the Washington Office of the PC(USA): 1) is comprehensive 2) provides a path to citizenship 3) protects workers 4) reunites families 5) restores the rule of law and enhances security 6) promotes citizenship and civic participation and helps local communities; and,

◆ S. 2075 (the Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act (“DREAM Act”) of 2005), that would allow undocumented children who complete high-school in the United States the opportunity for state resident tuition at public colleges and universities, and a pathway to eventual permanent resident status.

Fourth, that the Clerk of Session is directed to communicate this resolution to The President of the United States, George W. Bush, to New Jersey's U.S Senators, Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez, to the several New Jersey Members of Congress representing the greater Princeton area, to the congregation of Nassau Presbyterian Church and to the public news media.