

Summary of Episcopal Church Policy on Immigration and Refugee Issues

Updated 2024

Immigration Policy

- Support refugees and immigrants through advocacy, resettlement, and local ministries, urging the U.S. government to maintain robust refugee programs and enact comprehensive immigration reform ([2024-C031](#))
- Enable Episcopal Migration Ministries to expand its refugee resettlement and immigrant support services through increased funding, volunteer engagement, and advocacy efforts ([2024-D026](#))
- Encourage all Episcopal Church ministries to assess their intersections with migration, recognizing immigrants' presence in every community and the links between immigration and diverse social issues ([2024-D037](#))
- Advocate for expanding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) by creating pathways to citizenship, improving designation processes, and enhancing protections for TPS holders through continued Episcopal Church advocacy efforts ([2024-D067](#))
- Oppose the U.S. government's increased use of electronic monitoring and surveillance of immigrants that can intrude on their privacy and sense of personal security ([2022-D031](#))
- Advocate for a fundamental change to the way we process migrants, moving away from detention ([2022-D031](#))
- Advocate for our government to prioritize policies that will help reduce and eventually eliminate the need for detention and surveillance for virtually all migrants. ([2022-D031](#))
- Provide community-based and community-supported alternatives to detention; fund non-governmental non-profit organizations to deliver case management support based on individualized needs assessments; Include referrals to community-supported services, especially legal services; treat asylum seekers and migrants with dignity, humanity, and respect, assuring that any restrictions and compliance obligations placed on participants are the least onerous possible. ([2022-D031](#))
- Affirm comprehensive immigration reform to include: Keeping families together, Respecting the United States Bill of Rights, Honoring Human and Worker Rights, Providing a Pathway to Citizenship ([2018-C033](#))
- Urge all governments to keep their commitments and legal obligations to respect the rights and dignity of all people, including access to justice and social services, while recognizing the complexity of developing just immigration policies in any country, and the legitimate need to protect borders and address security threats to sovereign nations ([2018-D009](#))
- Support U.S. executive policies that deemphasize immigrant enforcement action against those who have not committed felony crimes ([2018-A178](#))
- Urge for a halt to the implementation and intensification of inhumane and unjust immigration policies and practices i.e. family detention and separation ([2018-A178](#))

- Provide access to physical and mental health care to all in immigration detention, including to the full range of reproductive health care and sanitary products for women and girls ([2018-A178](#))
- Advocate through education, communication, and representation before legislative authorities the continuation of Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for all persons fleeing to or currently resident in the US seeking refuge from violence, environmental disaster, economic devastation, or cultural abuse, domestic abuse, or other forms of abuse ([2018-C033](#))
- Urge our members, as people of faith and people of conscience, pledge to challenge and question any unjust immigration law, policy, or practice that is inconsistent with our biblical mandate to “not wrong or oppress a resident alien” (Exodus 22:21) ([2018-C009](#))
- Affirm our church’s support for U.S. executive policies that deemphasize immigrant enforcement action against those who have not committed felony crimes, and reaffirm our church’s support for congressional action for comprehensive and just reform of the broken U.S. immigration system. ([2018-C009](#))
- Advocate for increased access to and funding for legal orientation programs and legal representation for Central American refugees and asylum seekers ([2015-D033](#))
- Call for the immediate release of detained asylum seekers (particularly those who are LGBT, indigenous persons unable to communicate in English or Spanish, and persons who have disabilities or life-threatening illnesses). ([2015-D033](#))
- Call for an immediate end to the inhumane practice of family detention. ([2015-D033](#))
- Call upon The Episcopal Church to recommit to the spirit of the New Sanctuary Movement so congregations can assist immigrant individuals, unaccompanied minors, families, and communities in the absence of comprehensive, humane immigration reform. ([2015-D057](#))
- Support automatic grant of citizenship by the country in which a person is born (“birthright citizenship”). ([2015-D069](#))
- Urge Administration to provide: timely and readily available access to the child welfare system for detained parents; increased use of alternatives to detention for those individuals who pose no threat to society; the elimination of the detention bed mandate ([EXC062014.08](#))
- Commitment to humane and proportional immigration policies ([EXC062014.08](#))
- Deplore the unprecedented levels of detention and deportation carried out by the U.S. government against individuals who pose no threat to society. ([EXC062014.08](#))
- Urge that when deportations do occur, individuals are repatriated in a safe and humane manner. ([EXC062014.08](#))
- Support federal legislation that presents a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth and young adults ([2012-D067](#))
- Urge the US government to terminate any program that allows or funds local law enforcement agencies enforcement of immigration law, thereby allowing immigrant victims of crime to report it without fear of deportation. ([2009-B006](#))
- Urge the US government to establish a moratorium on roadside checkpoints and raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that tear families apart. ([2009-B006](#))

- Urge the US government to consider alternatives to a costly prison-like detention system for immigrants. ([2009-B006](#))
- Call for accountability and oversight to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care and sanitary conditions ([2009-B006](#))
- Urge the US Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform to give undocumented persons who have established roots in the United States a pathway to legalization and full social and economic integration into the United States. ([2009-B006](#))
- Urge the US government to allow undocumented youth who arrive as infants or children to pursue higher education and/or serve in the military in order to contribute to their communities and become citizens. ([2009-B006](#))
- While recognizing the duty and right of a sovereign nation to protect and defend its borders, adopt the following fundamental principles: Undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency; Legal workers should be allowed to enter the United States to respond to recognized labor force needs; Close family members should be allowed to reunite without undue delay with individuals lawfully present in the United States; Fundamental U.S. principles of legal due process should be granted all persons; Enforcement of national borders and immigration policies should be proportional and humane. ([2006-A017](#))
- Deplore any action by the Government of the United States which unduly emphasizes enforcement, including militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico, as the primary response to immigrants entering the United States to work ([2006-A017](#))
- Permit the orderly entry of legal workers to the US to respond to recognized labor force needs; ensure that close family members be allowed to enter or be reunited with individuals legally entering the US to accept employment; ensure that migrants working legally in the US be granted the rights and benefits accorded US workers, including the right to change employment. ([EXC062005.40](#))
- Permit undocumented migrants residing in the US at the time of the enactment of legislation to pursue legal residence and eventual citizenship if they are employed or responding to an offer of employment ([EXC062005.40](#))
- Urge the United States Government to implement policies and practices that extend the protection of asylum to such vulnerable persons. ([EXC022004.28](#))
- Urge that the Congress to expand the temporary workers' programs to include all persons currently residing in the U.S. engaged in meaningful labor, as well as overseas workers offered employment in the United States through formal contractual arrangements in response to the labor needs of specific sectors of the economy; that temporary workers receive compensation and benefits parallel those available to other legal residents; have the option of adjusting to permanent resident status, based upon a specified period of residence in the United States. ([2003-C033](#))
- Maintain a just system of asylum for persecuted persons seeking safety in the United States. ([1997-D081](#))
- Urge US government to ensure that needy immigrants are not unfairly denied essential services and benefits. ([1997-D081](#))

- Support a welfare system that does not discriminate on the basis of marital status, age, legal immigrant status or ability to identify other parent. ([EXC021995.07](#))
- Call the US Congress to enact immigration legislation that recognizes the human realities of undocumented people in this country and that provides asylum for those fleeing political repression. ([1985-D113](#))

Refugees and Global Migration

- Urge all nations, especially the United States, to actively accept vulnerable SOGIESC refugees and asylees, and not send them back to their countries of origin, where they face persecution, violence, prison and possible death ([2022-D045](#))
- Urge governments to expand refugee resettlement as a humanitarian response that offers individuals safety and opportunity; Insist that the United States of America and all other nations to the best of their ability, contribute to resettlement, establish and maintain safe and orderly humanitarian protection for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other migrants seeking long-term solutions and safety ([2018-D009](#))
- In the event that people are forced to migrate, we insist that our governments address the drivers holistically, without racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, health status, or religious prejudice ([2018-D009](#))
- We recognize that displacement due to climate change already happens and will increase, and we insist that our governments and the international community must commit to development of long-term protection solutions for persons displaced by climate change ([2018-D009](#))
- We will endeavor to learn and address root causes of migration and advocate for just solutions with Anglican/Episcopal, ecumenical, and interfaith partners ([2018-D009](#))
- Call upon The Episcopal Church to advocate for the protection of refugees, conflict resolution, and sustainable development in South Sudan and Sudan. ([2015-B018](#))
- Affirm the universal right to seek asylum ([2015-D033](#))
- Advocate for the United States government to play a positive role, to strengthen legal institutions through financial support, and to encourage the governments of Central America and Mexico to acknowledge and uphold the legal rights of the displaced, asylum seekers, and victims of crimes perpetrated by armed groups and/or state actors ([2015-D033](#))
- Acknowledge the regional nature of this migration and call for a robust, holistic, regional humanitarian response from the U.S. government and its allies that addresses the root causes of violence in the Central America region (including the deportation policies of the US government, arms trafficking, and drug consumption in the United States). ([2015-D033](#))
- Call upon governments to provide safety for their LGBTI residents and asylum for those seeking to emigrate from nations in which people are under threat of criminal penalties, imprisonment, torture, death, and/or mob violence on the basis of their LGBTI identity and/or advocacy ([EXC022014.29](#))
- Urge the United States Congress to reform the Refugee Act of 1980 in order to modernize the nation's refugee program; Modernizations such as meeting the urgent needs of a diverse refugee population through specialized and extended case management, culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services, recertification assistance for refugees with a

professional background, restoration of federal benefits from 8 months to at least one year, housing and transportation assistance, and other innovative policies that create sustainable integration pathways for refugees ([2012-B028](#))

- Urge the U.S Government and international community to work to end discriminatory practices that leave women and children vulnerable to statelessness, including efforts to ensure equality between women and men in nationality laws and access to documentation, the promotion of birth registration, and greater efforts in the identification stateless persons so that their needs may be addressed ([2012-B028](#))
- Reaffirm the historic commitment of the Episcopal Church to the protection of refugees and asylum seeker. ([EXC022004.28](#))
- Advocate a generous program of refugee admissions ([1997-D018](#))
- Support the right of women fleeing female genital mutilation to be granted refugee status and asylum in the US. ([1997-C017](#))
- Urge the US government to apply its refugee policies in a uniform and equitable manner without regard to the nationality, race or creed of those seeking refugee status. ([1994-A101](#))
- Commend efforts to resettle refugees and encourages Episcopalians to accept refugees in their communities. It urges fair treatment of Salvadoran and Haitian refugees and permanent status for political and economic refugees. ([1982-A063](#))