Just Communities of Arkansas

Statement in Support of

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

October, 2006

"Humanity is in need of leadership."

Rep. Joyce Elliott, Little Rock

We, the undersigned community-based leaders and organizations, come together to recognize the positive impact that the growing immigrant population has on our state and in our communities and neighborhoods. America is a nation of immigrants, and we value the dignity of all human beings. Families and children from all parts of the world have settled in Arkansas and are our neighbors, our church and congregational brethren, the schoolmates of our children and, indeed, our family members. We understand the immigration system is complex, broken and in need of comprehensive reform. We also recognize that the prevailing discourse based on race, skin color, language or ethnicity deprives people of basic human dignity. Accordingly, we must stop calling human beings “illegals.”

We stand for justice, both inside and outside our borders, and realize that enforcement alone is not enough to fix the broken immigration system that has separated families, placed human beings at the mercy of smugglers and undermined efforts for community building. Comprehensive immigration reform provides the opportunity to both ensure America’s security and stabilize our communities by providing avenues for millions of people to become citizens. The avenues may not be easy, but they will allow people who have worked for the benefit of American society to one day become citizens themselves.

We affirm that immigrants enrich America. They participate in all aspects of our society and share with other Americans the values of family, faith, education, justice and work.

We believe that immigrants and their families have enriched the economy, our culture and the community of Arkansas and voice our support for:

- Full access to public health and public safety programs;
- Humanitarian efforts offered by individuals and organizations;
- Family reunification and efforts that support the family structure;
- Equal opportunity to contribute to civic society;
- Protection of workers from exploitation;
- Full access to education at all levels;
- A border protection policy that is just and humane;
- Federal-level immigration policy and enforcement; and
- Public policies and laws for the good of all that are not strictly punitive.
We urge our elected officials to take this opportunity to reform the immigration system and design public policies that strengthen all our communities.

[Click here](#) to sign on to partner with JCA on Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Read a list of those who are allies in our effort to provide this reform.