

Arizona Interfaith Network

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Press Release

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Arizona will Pay a Heavy Price for Draconian Immigration Law *Arizona Bishops and the AIN denounce Governor's approval of SB1070*

Governor Jan Brewer's decision to sign Arizona SB1070 will damage our economy and the social fabric of the state. By codifying racial discrimination, this law makes Arizona the laughing stock of the nation and a pariah on the international stage. The judicatory heads of major Arizona religious denominations and the Arizona Interfaith Network are deeply distressed that by her approval of SB1070, Governor Brewer sacrificed political courage for political expediency.

"This bill does nothing to address any border security concerns," said Bishop Minerva Carcaño of the United Methodist Church, Desert Southwest Conference, "At our borders and in our congregations, schools, workplaces and service programs, we witness the human consequences of an inadequate, outdated system. The passage of SB1070 demonstrates why America needs Comprehensive Immigration Reform: frustration with our broken immigration system is driving Arizona to make inappropriate and self-defeating efforts in this area. We want our broken immigration system to be healed through a just transformation of the law at the appropriate federal level of jurisdiction, which makes it possible to meet the labor needs of American business while making our border secure."

Arizona is ground zero for our nation's broken immigration policies, but SB1070 does nothing to address the root causes of the immigration problem. "This law offends the dignity of all Arizonans," said Bishop Kirk Smith, of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona. "The tendency to scapegoat a vulnerable population for Arizona's economic stagnation and federal inaction on immigration issues is an unworthy and counterproductive response to the problems we face. This law will make our communities and neighborhoods less safe, it will undermine our efforts to recover from this recession, further strain our broken state budget, and fill our courts with more lawsuits and less justice."

Although the tendency to seek scapegoats during a recession is all too common, Arizona will pay a heavy price for codifying nativism. SB1070 will exacerbate Arizona's economic train wreck, since Latino's -- citizens or not -- will seek a more hospitable place to live, work, pay taxes, and spend their hard-earned money. Since Latinos will fear to report crime, neighborhoods will become less safe. Police resources will be stretched to the breaking point, interfering with their ability to pursue dangerous criminals.

According to Fr. Glenn Jenks of the Arizona Interfaith Network, these are only a few of the reasons this bill is bad law for neighborhoods and for our state economy: "At its root, SB1070 violates the basic moral code that is common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam: we must welcome the stranger as we would welcome God himself. It is time to raise a moral and prophetic voice against this terrible law, which causes even more distress to families and society in general, pushing the immigrant population further into the shadows."

The Arizona Interfaith Network is a non-partisan, broad-based organization composed of congregations, schools and non-profits throughout Arizona, working to strengthen family and community across lines of race, class and religion. AIN has consistently expressed concern that enforcement-only strategies to the complex problem of immigration will harm the economy, undermine public safety and damage the social fabric of our multi-cultural community.