



# The United Methodist Church

## Indiana Area

Indiana Conference

### STATEMENT REGARDING IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION

The legislature of the state of Indiana is considering the complicated issue of immigration. Certainly it is understandable that many citizens and many State Senators and Representatives are concerned about this important issue. However, our Christian faith brings a perspective to this issue which needs to be voiced, and our United Methodist Church has a particular stance on this issue which I share as the Bishop of the Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church.

Among the proposed bills before the Senate and House is one which seems to be gathering some support, namely Senate Bill No. 590. I have read through this proposed legislation, and while I am not an attorney and may not fully understand all of the legal implications of this bill, I do believe that it would be a mistake for the Senate and/or House to pass this Bill and for the Governor to sign it, for these reasons;

First, this bill begins to move the state of Indiana into areas which rightly belong to the federal government, namely the attempt to regulate immigration. Certainly there is frustration over the failure of our federal government to fulfill its duty in this area, but having each of our 50 states adopt their own immigration policies would be chaos and a violation of our U.S. Constitution.

Second, this bill would place our police officers and our business owners in an impossible situation of trying to determine when and if they should demand proof of citizenship or legal residency. It is clear from the experience in other states which have attempted similar provisions that the police are almost forced into racial profiling to meet the requirements of such a provision. Likewise business owners are faced with new liabilities and costs as they seek to monitor their customers according to the requirements of such legislation.

Third, this bill would only add to the climate of fear and suspicion which permeates too much of our culture already.

I believe that Senate Bill No. 590 is contrary to the Social Principles of our United Methodist Church, and therefore I urge all of our United Methodist people to express to their State Senators and Representatives their opposition to this bill. We must find a better way to enforce the laws, which already exist around the immigration debate, and we also must find a better way to protect against racial profiling.

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