

September 30, 2013

Dear California Delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives,

We, the undersigned California organizations, are writing to express our strong opposition to the so-called “Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement Act” or “SAFE Act” (H.R. 2278).

As home to the largest population of immigrants in the United States, California needs Congress to create a common-sense immigration process with an inclusive path to citizenship for all undocumented Americans. And while efforts for reform move forward in Congress, we need our California Representatives to oppose cruel, expensive and impractical approaches like H.R. 2278.

This extreme legislation would permit every jurisdiction in America to implement the divisive and discriminatory approach to immigration taken by Arizona. Wasting billions of dollars on the profiling, detention, and deportation of community members who aspire to be citizens, H.R. 2278 would leave as its legacy countless shattered families, greatly diminished confidence in local law enforcement, and rampant violations of our most important values as a nation.

The bill also punishes the most basic human interactions of care and support. Even a domestic violence advocate who drives an undocumented survivor of abuse to a shelter could find herself behind bars for “smuggling.”

A wide spectrum of law enforcement leaders, including the Major Cities Chiefs Police Association, and over 150 faith-based organizations have already voiced opposition to H.R. 2278. We, the over 115 California organizations listed below, represent a broad cross section of groups, including faith based and domestic violence groups, who are unified in urging you to oppose H.R. 2278.

We urgently need your leadership because if passed, this bill would damage public safety, spur rampant racial profiling and lead to numerous unconstitutional detentions. Among its many harmful provisions, H.R. 2278 would:

- Criminalize undocumented presence alone, an issue which stems from this nation’s lack of a workable immigration process and is currently a civil offense. This would subject all 2.6 million undocumented immigrants currently residing in California’s communities to criminal prosecution.
- Harm local economies and businesses, and create an unwelcome climate for international investors. A severe economic impact has been felt in states that have implemented immigration enforcement laws, even in cases where courts have barred implementation of the core provisions of these laws. For example, in 2011, Georgia suffered a \$300 million estimated loss in harvested crops statewide, with a \$1 billion total estimated impact on Georgia’s economy. California does not need and cannot afford similar economic losses.
- Damage public safety by accelerating the transformation of local law enforcement

officers into federal immigration agents. Specifically, the bill would expand the 287(g) program despite well-documented abuses, grant authority to local jurisdictions to create and enforce their own anti-immigrant laws, and encourage local law enforcement to arrest and detain people for federal immigration violations. This would lead to racial profiling and discrimination as people could be subject to law enforcement stops, arrests, and detention based solely on what they look like or how they speak.

- Punish state and localities that have passed community-policing policies that limit police entanglement in immigration enforcement. This is simply the wrong approach. Instead, we need inclusive policies that save state resources and make us all safer by ensuring that immigrant crime survivors and witnesses can work with local law enforcement without fear of deportation. A recent research report found that 44% of Latinos overall and 70% of undocumented Latinos, are less likely to contact the police to report they have been the victim of a crime if they fear it will lead to inquiries about immigration status.¹
- Require thousands of civil immigration records be input into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. This would clutter up the NCIC, a critical tool for law enforcement, and local law enforcement officers using the system would have to waste precious time deciding whether a “hit” in the system merited action.
- Expand mandatory detention, without a bond hearing, to new categories, wasting resources detaining individuals do not pose a public safety or flight risk. In addition, contrary to existing Supreme Court precedent, the Act would subject certain noncitizens who cannot be repatriated to their home countries to indefinite detention.
- Defund the broadly supported “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” program, which has already provided deportation reprieves to 127,000 California youth – more than any other state in the nation.

We need California's Representatives to be champions for inclusiveness, equality, and common sense. Thus, we urge you to oppose HR 2278.

Sincerely,

10,000 Degrees
605 Citizenship Project
Access, Inc.
ACLU of California
ACT for Women & Girls
Advocacy and Justice Committee, California-Nevada United Methodist Church
African Advocacy Network
Alianza Latinoamericana por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes

¹ See Nik Theodore, *Insecure Communities: Latino Perceptions of Police Involvement in Immigration Enforcement*, University of Illinois at Chicago (May 2013), available at http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/documents/1213/Insecure_Communities_Report_FINAL.pdf.

Alliance for Justice
American Jewish Committee - Los Angeles Region
API Equality
Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - L.A.
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
Bay Area DREAM Coalition
Black Alliance for Just Immigration
California Church Impact
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Labor Federation
California National Organization for Women
California Nurses Association
California Partnership
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
Canal Alliance
Catholic Charities CYO
Central American Resource Center - L.A.
Centro de Integración Familiar
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice - L.A.
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice - Orange County
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Communities for a New California
Comunidades Unidas
Dolores Street Community Services
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
Educators for Fair Consideration
El Concilio
Employee Rights Center
Episcopal Community Services of Northern California
Episcopal Diocese of California Migration and Immigration Task Force
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality Alliance of San Diego County
Escondido Human Rights Committee
Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy-EBASE
Filipino Advocates for Justice
Filipino Ministry - St. George Church
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego
Foundation for Change
Glendale West Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization
Grupo Amistad
Hispanic Ministry of New Albany
Human Rights Council of Oceanside
Hunger Action L.A.

Immigrant Legal Resource Center
 Immigration Law Association at U.C. Davis
 Immigration Task Force of the Cal-Nevada Annual Conference of the United
 Methodist Church
 Inland Congregations United for Change
 Institute for Socio-Economic Justice
 Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights – Clergy and Laity United for Economic
 Justice CA
 Jewish Community Relations Council
 Jewish Labor Committee - Western Region
 Justice for Immigrants Coalition of Inland Southern California
 Justice for Our Neighbors - United Methodist Committee on Relief
 Justice Overcoming Boundaries in San Diego County
 Khmer Girls in Action
 Korean Resource Center
 L.A. Community Legal Center and Educational
 La Casa de La Raza
 Latino & Latina Roundtable of San Gabriel Valley and Pomona
 Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
 Latinos y Latinas en Acción
 Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center
 Librería del Pueblo
 LifeBridge International
 Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition
 MCC in the Valley
 Mission Economic Development Agency
 Mountain View Dreamers
 Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
 Mujeres Unidas y Activas
 Multifaith Immigration Coalition for Action - Contra Costa County
 National Immigration Law Center
 National Latino Evangelical Coalition
 National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
 National Organization of Social Workers, California Chapter
 Office of Santa Cruz City Council Member Tony Madrigal
 Orange County Dream Team
 Pangea Legal Services
 Peninsula Interfaith Coalition on Immigration
 People of Faith for Justice
 Physicians for a National Health Program - California
 People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) - CA
 People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights
 PowerPAC
 Priority Africa Network
 Public Counsel
 People United for a Better Life in Oakland

Pueblo de Fe Unido
Redwood Community Health Coalition
Riverside Latino Voter Project
Salvadoran American National Network
San Diego Immigrant Youth Collective
San Francisco Department of Public Health Newcomers Health Program
San Francisco Immigrant Legal & Education Network
San Francisco Interfaith Coalition on Immigration
Share Our Selves
Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform
Service Immigrant Rights & Education Network
Sojourners of Spectrum & Action
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Street Level Health Project
Tabernacle of African & Caribbean Association of San Diego
Todec Legal Center
Union de Ex-Braceros e Inmigrantes
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Luis Obispo County
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of California
Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education
Watts/Century Latino Organization
Young Workers United