

Unity Statement on Immigrant Rights

Together, We Have. Together, We Are. Together, We Will....

Together, We Have

- Worked the fields and in the canneries
- Nursed the ill and the elderly
- Taught the young and tomorrow's leaders
- Fought for freedom and defeated tyranny
- Invented new technologies and perfected the old
- Ministered to congregations celebrating life and coping with grief

Together, We Are

- The doctors and nurses who heal the sick and tend the wounded
- The engineers who build skyscrapers and roads
- The accountants who keep businesses running, small and large
- The custodians and room cleaners, clerks and dock hands who do thankless jobs with dignity and pride
- The veterans who braved world wars to defend democracy
- The farm workers, cooks and waiters, who put food on America's tables
- The playwrights and poets, painters and musicians who awaken our dreams and inspire our actions
- Four million people who are your neighbors, friends, co-workers, employees, partners and community members

Together, We Will

- Continue to cherish the American values of equality and freedom, and oppose misguided policies that undermine them.
- Keep families and communities, workplaces and homes together, because dividing us weakens us all
- Fight for immigrant rights that value our contributions to society and give us the opportunity to fulfill our potential to build a better world.

Signed 2010:

National Alliance for Filipino Concerns, Benjamin E. Alforque, MSC, President, NAFCON, Antonio G. Abuan, MS, Treasurer, NAFCON, Filipino Ministry – Diocese of San Bernardino
Naida Castro, Chairperson, Filipino Ministry – DSB Fr. Dennis Legaspi, Director, Filipino Ministry – DSB,
BAYAN – USA, GABRIELA- USA

Our Principles and Demands:

Uphold the dignity and humanity of all individuals. Legalization now!

- Civilized society embraces equality and upholds the humanity of all people. Labeling individuals “illegal” demeans them, and forces millions to endure dangerous jobs, and to toil in the shadows in slave-like conditions. Criminalizing people for being “undocumented” subjects millions to the exploitation of traffickers, to remain in abusive relationships, or to refrain from reporting crimes because the authorities may imprison the victim instead of the perpetrator. We need legalization now, to free our community from the indignity of being labeled as “illegal”, and the inhumane treatment which is sanctioned by it and endangers us all.

Unify and Protect Families

- Families of all shapes and sizes—parents and children, siblings, cousins and grandparents, same sex couples—deserve to be together. Many Filipino families have been waiting over 20 years to have their petitions for loved ones approved. We must clear the Family Visa backlog to stabilize our communities, both in the U.S. and in our homeland. We must protect immigrant women and children escaping abuse, and refuse to allow them to be subjected to the further cruelty of deportation. Children of immigrants should be shielded from all harm, including separation from their families and the threat of deportation. Support services must be provided in our languages and with sensitivity to our cultural values and norms.

Value Our Labor— Workers Rights for All!

- The U.S. was built with the blood and sweat of working people. All workers must have the right to organize and to be free from exploitative contracts and working conditions. Having a underclass of workers drives down wages and protections for all of us. We must normalize the status of guest workers, because temporary contracts serve as a tool to undermine all workers. Law enforcement should punish illegal recruitment agencies and unscrupulous employers and lawyers, who maximize profits by preying on vulnerable and desperate workers—workers should not be penalized for the actions of their employers. The labor and contributions of all people, including immigrants and those who are undocumented, should be valued equally.

Dignity, Respect and Due Process for All!

- The US government’s aggressive foreign policies of war and exploitation fuel economic and social instability worldwide. Immigrants should not be blamed for our national security concerns. Rampant raids, deportation, and inhumane conditions in detention centers jeopardize the safety of everyone. The billions of tax payer dollars contracted to build up and further militarize the U.S.-Mexico borders does not make us safer. We must build our immigration policies on the sound universality of human rights, not the volatility of criminalization and militarization.

Forced Migration is a Result of the Global Economic Crisis

- One-sided and unfair trade agreements that have been designed to maximize profits for greedy corporations have destroyed the economy of the Philippines and many other countries, contributing to the ever-worsening economic crisis that has forced millions of Filipinos to seek jobs and means of survival elsewhere. U.S. political and military support to corrupt regimes who bankrupt their countries and repress their people also fuel worsening migrant and refugee conditions. We will link arms in solidarity with all migrant communities in the U.S. and internationally, until we have built a society where all people can thrive, families are not fragmented and separated by the urgent need for survival, and our homelands have the conditions in which all people can live a decent and humane life.