



March 4, 2021

Dear Members of Congress:

As CEOs of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and Lutheran Services in America, the Presiding Bishop Eaton, synod bishops, and ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region, we write to express our support for the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021. In view of a new opportunity to make fair and compassionate transformations to our nation's broken immigration system, we call on Congress to come together around a long overdue solution that reflects our shared values as a nation.

The ELCA has a long legacy of welcoming and caring for newcomers. Our churches began helping immigrants and uprooted people as early as the 1860s. Today, as always, we are called by God to love our neighbor, accompany the vulnerable, and welcome the stranger. Our congregants share our concern for displaced children and families and support our sister organizations, like LIRS and Lutheran Services in America, in their work. Lutheran Services in America leads one of the largest health and human services networks in the country, made up of over 300 Lutheran social ministry organizations that operate with over \$22 billion in annual revenue and help improve the lives of 1 in 50 Americans each year. LIRS, one of the most prominent refugee resettlement agencies, has worked to assist over half a million people seeking safety, hope, and a life in the U.S. over the course of its 80-year history. Our deep levels of expertise and experience serving the most vulnerable compels us to lift our voices and ask legislators from both parties to preserve human dignity through our federal immigration policies.

Currently, our immigration system is saddled with ineffective approaches that stir fear and turmoil among migrants fleeing persecution and those seeking better futures for their families. Administrative barriers, backlogs, and punitive policies have led to the separation of immigrant families and their marginalization as human beings. The root causes of displacement in Central America, including inequality, violence, corruption, and environmental degradation, all of which advance insecurity, continue to be ignored and demand we simultaneously offer protection to those who need it while recognizing the driving factors that motivate last-resort migration.

Guided by our faith values and biblical teachings, we believe that immigration policies must prioritize and honor the God-given dignity of each person, especially those who live on the margins of society. We regard the family as an indispensable social institution and stand firmly against policies that cause the separation of families. We are therefore pleased to see that the proposed legislation works to recognize these values. The act promotes family unity by establishing a roadmap to earned citizenship for undocumented individuals, including Dreamers, who as children and adults have invested in local communities far and wide. It reduces visa backlogs, processing delays, and barriers to reunification. The act supports the flourishing of our communities by increasing immigrant integration services and strengthens protections for immigrant workers. Its approach to regional migration develops

opportunities for children and families to safely seek protection and reunify, while pushing for long-term sustainable growth and stability to address the root causes of migration.

Making progress on these long overdue immigration reforms is important to us as leaders who serve in church and society. We ask God to guide our nation and grant the grace of a welcoming heart. To that end, we ask you to work collaboratively, with haste, to promote this comprehensive legislative solution through Congress and provide lasting solutions that will strengthen our nation for generations to come. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



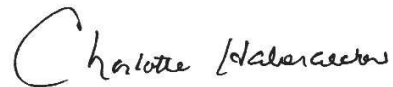
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Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Krish O'Mara Vignarajah
President and CEO
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



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370. The Rev.Dr. Mark Oldenburg - Biglerville, PA
371. The Rev. Fred Opalinski - Reading, PA
372. The Rev. Drahomir Oslik - Waynesboro, PA
373. The Rev. Bruce Osterhout - West Reading, PA
374. The Rev.Dr. Martin Otto-Zimmann - Gettysburg, PA
375. Pastor Ryan Pusch - Leechburg, PA
376. The Rev.Dr. Philip Ramstad - Ford City, PA
377. The Rev. Sarah Rossing - Youngstown, PA
378. The Rev. Howard Sayford - Warrington, PA
379. The Rev. Karen M. Sease - Lansdale, PA
380. Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown - Spring Grove, PA
381. The Rev. William Snyder - York, PA
382. The Rev. Linda Theophilus - Pittsburgh, PA
383. The Rev. Kim Truebenbach - Gilbertsville, PA
384. The Rev.Dr. Gilson Waldkoenig - Gettysburg, PA
385. The Rev. Kate Warn - Manheim, PA
386. The Rev. Carla Wilson - Mountville, PA
387. Pastor Alan Wolkenhauer - Reading, PA
388. The Rev.Dr. Anne Woodman Howe - Perryopolis, PA
389. The Rev. Diana Ceballos - San Juan, PR
390. The Rev. Pablo Quinones - Toa Baja, PR
391. The Rev. Ricardo Rivera - Caguas, PR
392. The Rev. Dennis Kohl - Kingston, RI
393. Pastor Paul Aebischer - Columbia, SC

394. The Rev. Jeanne Befano - Hilton Head Island, SC
395. The Rev. Michele Fischer - Newberry, SC
396. Deacon Barbara Rowell - Columbia, SC
397. The Rev. John Stirewalt - Columbia, SC
398. The Rev.Dr. James Fowler - Vermillion, SD
399. The Rev. Christine Hallenbeck Ask - Sioux Falls, SD
400. The Rev.Dr. Paul Rohde - Sioux Falls, SD
401. Deacon Susan Rohde - Sioux Falls, SD
402. Pastor Paul Frank - Gallatin, TN
403. The Rev. Lewis Groce - Hendersonville, TN
404. The Rev. Paula Smith - Greeneville, TN
405. The Rev. Matt Steinhauer - Hendersonville, TN
406. The Rev. Andrew Bell - Bellville, TX
407. The Rev. Evan Cameron - Brenham, TX
408. The Rev.Dr. Don Carlson - Houston, TX
409. The Rev. Ashley Dellagiacomia - Houston, TX
410. The Rev. Kelsey Fitting-Snyder - Waco, TX
411. The Rev. Tyler Gubscg - Dickinson, TX
412. The Rev. James Havard - Houston, TX
413. The Rev. Glenn Hohlt - New Ulm, TX
414. The Rev. Drew Ingram - Spicewood, TX
415. The Rev. Jen Kindsvatter - La Grange, TX
416. The Rev. Sabine Lamar - Beaumont, TX
417. The Rev.Dr. Duane Larson - Houston, TX
418. Pastor Diana Linden-Johnson - El Paso, TX
419. The Rev. Chris Markert - Houston, TX
420. Pastor Arthur Murphy - Houston, TX
421. The Rev. Brad otto - Cypress, TX
422. Pastor Chon Pugj - Texas City, TX
423. Deacon Ben Remmert - Houston, TX
424. The Rev. Richard Rhoades - Galveston, TX

425. The Rev. Mindy Roll - Houston, TX
426. The Rev. David Roschke - Houston, TX
427. Pastor Franz Schemmel - Weatherford, TX
428. The Rev. Gnana Segaran - Garland, TX
429. The Rev. Kirstin Springmeyer - Richmond, TX
430. Pastor Stephanie Stark - Cat Spring, TX
431. Pastor William Starkweather - Sugar Land, TX
432. The Rev.Dr. Elizabeth Stein - Sugar Land, TX
433. The Rev. Adam Stockton - Frisco, TX
434. The Rev.Dr. Steve Stutz - Houston, TX
435. Pastor Jerry Wirtley - College Station, TX
436. Deacon Gay Zimmerman - Houston, TX
437. The Rev. Christopher Berry - Salt Lake City, UT
438. The Rev. Debra Jimenez - Ogden, UT
439. Pastor Rebecca Johnson Aardahl - Price, UT
440. The Rev. Steven Klemz - Salt Lake City, UT
441. The Rev. David Nichols - Salt Lake City, UT
442. The Rev. DanaLee Simon - Salt Lake City, UT
443. The Rev.Dr. J. Paul Balas - Winchester, VA
444. The Rev. Joshua Copeland - Christiansburg, VA
445. The Rev. Annabelle Markey - Sterling, VA
446. The Rev. Patricia Nabers - Orange, VA
447. Pastor Dan Roschke - Fairfax, VA
448. The Rev. Monica Weber - Blacksburg, VA
449. The Rev.Dr. Nancy Wright - South Burlington, VT
450. The Rev. Arianna Arends - Cheney, WA
451. The Rev. Paul Benz - Everett, WA
452. Deacon Heidi Cryer - Kennewick, WA
453. The Rev. Gary Dalenius - Kenmore, WA
454. The Rev. Paul Eldred - Bellevue, WA
455. Pastor Joanne Elise Engquist - Seattle, WA
456. Pastor Alan Eschenbacher - Spokane, WA
457. The Rev. Lara Forbes - Bellevue, WA
458. The Rev. Laura Harris-Ferree - Seattle, WA
459. The Rev. Anja Helmon - Kenmore, WA
460. The Rev. Wesley Howell - Pullman, WA
461. The Rev. David Kappus - Spokane, WA
462. Pastor Kathryn LePard - Spokane, WA
463. Pastor Deborah Mach - Lake Stevens, WA
464. The Rev. Kathleen McCallum Sachse - Kirkland, WA
465. The Rev. Kimberly Meinecke - Spokane, WA
466. Pastor Ronald Moen - Quincy, WA
467. Deacon Cheri Nelson - Spokane, WA
468. The Rev. Elizabeth Orling - Port Ludlow, WA
469. Pastor Paul Palumbo - Chelan, WA
470. The Rev. Glenn C. Petersen - University Place, WA
471. The Rev. Scott Postlewait - Mill Creek, WA
472. The Rev.Dr. Gail Rautmann - Everett, WA
473. The Rev. Kirsten Sauey Hofmann - Kennewick, WA
474. The Rev. John Schraan - Yakima, WA
475. The Rev. Mary Shaima - Stevenson, WA
476. Deacon Edwin Aparicio - Waukesha, WI
477. The Rev. Brian Bankert - Appleton, WI
478. Pastor Andy Behrendt - Waupaca, WI
479. Deacon David Berndt - Wautoma, WI
480. The Rev. Jamie Brieske - Eau Claire, WI
481. Pastor Catherine Burnette - Appleton, WI
482. The Rev. Frank Conner - Appleton, WI
483. The Rev. Richard DeBenedetto - Oconto, WI
484. The Rev. Dennis Ellisen - Appleton, WI
485. The Rev. Joseph Ellwanger - Milwaukee, WI

486. The Rev.Dr. Carl Evenson - Scandinavia, WI
487. The Rev. Joshua Fite - Green Bay, WI
488. The Rev. Gary Froseth - Wausau, WI
489. The Rev. Douglas Holtz - Oshkosh, WI
490. The Rev. Libby Howe - La Crosse, WI
491. The Rev.Dr. Dennis Jacobsen - Glendale, WI
492. The Rev. Jane Johnson - Stevens Point, WI
493. Deacon Sherie Kruse - West Bend, WI
494. The Rev. Stan Lillich - Madison, WI
495. The Rev. Christian Marien - Waukesha, WI
496. The Rev. Denise Mbise - South Milwaukee, WI
497. The Rev.Dr. Roger McQuiston - Appleton, WI
498. The Rev. Catherine Mode - Neenah, WI
499. Pastor Al Moen - Eau Claire, WI
500. The Rev. Kelly Nieman Anderson - Racine, WI
501. The Rev. Gary Nokleberg - Appleton, WI
502. The Rev. Tyler Rasmussen - Wauwatosa, WI
503. Pastor Scot Ruffatto - Mukwonago, WI
504. The Rev. Clay Salmela - Ripon, WI
505. Pastor Dennis Schatt - Green Bay, WI
506. The Rev. William Schrubba - Wausau, WI
507. The Rev. Justin Smoot - Wausau, WI
508. Pastor Kimberly Stowell - Ripon, WI
509. The Rev. Jeffrey Tengesdal - Appleton, WI
510. The Rev. Cindy Warmbier-Meyer - De Pere, WI
511. The Rev. Alyssa Weaver - Iola, WI
512. Pastor Mark Ziemer - Waupaca, WI
513. The Rev. Krista Zimmerman - Racine, WI
514. The Rev. Inger Hanson - Jackson, WY
515. The Rev. Nathan Keith - Laramie, WY
516. Pastor Philip Wold - Sheridan, WY