

Organizations call for a humane immigration policy

For more than 30 years, EPISO (1980) and Border Interfaith (2003) have asked elected officials at the local, state and national levels to endorse our Human Development Agenda. This agenda is multi-issue, including balanced economic development, infrastructure and education issues, as well as comprehensive immigration reform. While the Trump administration halted the practice of separating families June 20, children are still separated from their parents and asylum-seekers are turned away at the border. As faithbased institutions representing Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities, we stand united in our social justice traditions of the “care of the stranger.”

In light of these sacred traditions and in light of our immigrant story as a nation, EPISO and Border Interfaith call upon the federal government to negotiate a fair and humane immigration reform policy that serves the common good of both our country and those who seek a better life here, fleeing from fear and violence in their countries. EPISO and Border Interfaith join our sister organizations as part of the West/Southwest Industrial Areas Foundation Network and the Network of Texas Organizations to call for the following: 1) Reunite the over 2,300 families who are currently in custody. We want to know that the federal government has a strategy, a timetable and adequate funding appropriated to reunite these children with their parents.

2) Stop family detention. Congress should lead the fight to electronically monitor — not detain — these families because it is a more humane, highly effective and low-cost way to monitor these families.

3) Ensure that adequate numbers of pediatricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and pediatric nurses can monitor centers and

guarantee that children, and especially infants, are getting the care and attention that they need while there are still children without their parents in custody.

4) Honor the obligations imposed under the Flores Settlement Agreement which establishes a 20-day legal limit for the detention of minors — with or without their parents.

These actions should be taken without delay.

Bishop Mark Seitz, Diocese of El Paso Rabbi Ben Zeidman, Temple Mount Sinai Fr. Ed Roden-Lucero, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Pastor Diana Linden-Johnson, Peace Lutheran Church Fr. Pablo Matta, St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church Rev. Jessica Vaughan Lower, Grace Presbyterian Church Fr. Ken Ducre, Christ the Savior Catholic Church The Rev. Kati Houts, retired pastor of Metropolitan Community Church Fr. Miguel Angel Sanchez, St. Jude & Santa Teresita Catholic Churches Fr. Justin Gibson, St. Francis on the Hill Episcopal Church Fr. Juan Antonio Gutierrez, All Saints Catholic Church Pastor John Nelsen, University Presbyterian Church