



Dear Members of the Council of the District of Columbia,

We, the undersigned leaders of our faith communities, are writing to you about the Migrant Support and Services Act of 2022 currently before the Council.

Many of our congregations have provided support to migrants in our city, both those who were bused here by the governors of Texas and Arizona and those who arrived over years by other means. Many of us are currently offering emergency respite space, food, transportation, access to health care and clothing, as well as a listening ear and a welcoming face to those entering our city. In addition, many of us have continued to accompany and support families and individuals who have chosen to make DC their home.

We are excited that through the emergency and temporary bills, the city will be offering emergency services as our resources are stretched thin. We believe that the city should have infrastructure to attend to arriving migrants whether they are staying in DC for hours, days, months or years. We hope that some funding provided through this legislation will go to the congregations currently supporting immigrants and refugees in the city.

We are committed to continuing to welcome and accompany migrants, and support an Office of Migrant Services which will assist asylum seekers in accessing legal services, offer transportation to those moving forward, and support resettlement for those who choose to remain as neighbors in the District.

However, we are deeply concerned about the provisions in the approved Migrant Services and Supports Temporary Act that amend the Homeless Services Reform Act by increasing barriers to access or singling out groups of immigrants and refugees for exclusion from these services.

We understand that reducing homelessness is a priority of both the Council and the Mayor. It's a priority that we share. We also understand that members of this Council have worked hard to increase funding to the Department of Human Services to better serve our unhoused neighbors. We are not asking that migrants get preferential treatment over US born residents of DC. We are simply asking that the Council doesn't create additional barriers for migrants not faced by US born residents.

Many of us have also worked with the council to get robust policies passed at the city level to protect our unhoused neighbors as well as immigrants and refugees in the

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district. We are disappointed to see the city go backward and create new laws barring people from services based on their immigration status.

As congregation leaders in the city, we thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns regarding the Migrant Services and Supports Act of 2022.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Hannah Spiro, Hill Havurah

Paul Fitch, 8th Day Church

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, First Congregational UCC

Rev. Barbara Gerlach (retired), First Congregational UCC

Ellen Jennings, Cleveland Park Congregational UCC

Jacob Singer-Beilin, Bet Mishpachah

Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, National City Christian Church

Rabbi Hannah Goldstein, Temple Sinai

Merwyn De Mello, Assisi Community

Sister Marie Lucey OSF, Franciscan Action Network

Rev. Laura Kigweba James, The General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church

Sister Carol Gilbert, OP, Dominican Sister Grand Rapids

Matt Lohmeier, Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio

Bill Mefford, The Festival Center

Rabbi Hannah Spiro, Hill Havurah

Dora Currea, (Faith leader and Co-Chair of Sanctuary Ministry)

Washington National Cathedral

John Nolan, St. Columba's Episcopal

Rachel Pacheco, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

Rev. Emily Wilkes, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Anne-Marie Jeffery, Episcopal Diocese of Washington

Rev. Karen Brau, Luther Place Church

The Reverend Michele H. Morgan, St Mark's Episcopal Capitol Hill

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Hosler, Washington City Church of the Brethren

Elder Marco Grimaldo, Church of the Pilgrims

The Rev. Lisa Ahuja, St. Thomas' Parish

Rev. Betty E. Landis, Saint Stephen Lutheran Church of Silver Spring

Kevin Vandiver, Lutheran Church of the Reformation

Rev. KC Kvasnička-Slack, Washington Ethical Society

Rev. Dr. Lydia E Munoz, National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry

Diane Roche, Religious of the Sacred Heart

Elias Johnson, Congregation Action Network