

Media Release

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SACRAMENTO - Faith leaders representing many of California's major denominations and faith-based organizations met at the state Capitol on Wednesday, June 21, with Governor Brown's staff to urge the Governor to sign a strong California Values Act, Senate Bill 54, introduced by Senate President pro Tem Kevin de Leon(D-Los Angeles) when it reaches his desk. The participating faith communities, individually and collectively, want to ensure that California continues to welcome those fleeing poverty and violence in their homelands and to treat our refugee and immigrant friends and neighbors with dignity and respect.

The California Values Act is intended to protect the safety and well-being of all Californians by ensuring that state and local resources are not used to fuel mass deportations, separate families, and ultimately hurt California's economy. It will provide essential safeguards to ensure that police, schools, health facilities, and courts remain accessible to Californians from all walks of life and that California's limited resources are directed to matters of greatest concern to state and local governments.

Representatives from the following statewide faith-based organizations attended: California Catholic Conference, California Council of Churches/IMPACT, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Friends Committee on Legislation of California, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California, Lutheran Office of Public Policy-California, National Council of Jewish Women CA, PICO, Reform California, and Unitarian-Universalists. Senior clergy from the faith communities were also in attendance.

"We believe SB 54 is fundamentally a moral issue," said Claire Lipschultz, spokesperson for the interfaith coalition that organized the meeting and State Policy Advocacy Chair for the National Council of Jewish Women CA. "Today, as in the past, frightened and threatened men, women, and children all over the world look to our country for safety and the opportunity for a better life for themselves and their families. They have continuously contributed to the dynamism of our economy and the richness of our culture. We need to renew our commitment to love and compassion, the bedrock values of all faiths. We urge our state legislature and the Governor to enact a bill that defends our state's commitment to these values."

Rev. Jason Bense, from the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, added that "building community trust is essential for our social fabric. Trust can be elusive, slowly built and quickly eroded. SB 54 works to build community trust among immigrant newcomers and the police and other legal authorities that is so essential for our democratic society."

"We are appealing to Governor Brown as a person of faith to act humanely toward all residents of our great state and not be swayed by anyone's nationality," said the Rev. Dr. Art Cribbs, executive director of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity. "It is wrong to treat people differently because they are immigrants."

SB 54 is being heard in Assembly committees, having passed out of the Senate in early April.

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