

A Social Justice Minute on Immigration and Family Unity

With a commitment to action on behalf of social justice since our founding in 1815, Cincinnati Friends Meeting has discerned a requirement to speak and to act in response to the ongoing immigration crisis within the United States, in particular as it relates to the safety and well-being of children and the re-unification of families.

We affirm the words of Martin Luther King when he said, “our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” The time for silence now is within our meetinghouse and houses of faith as we come together in community to worship. The time for action is now within our own neighborhoods, cities, states and nation. As Quakers, we are required by our testimonies related to truth, integrity, justice, equality and community to become visible, active advocates on behalf of children and families now being used as political pawns in national and international politics.

Through this Minute, we announce our public commitment to speak and to act so that every child, regardless of race, religion or country of origin, is guaranteed the right to be nurtured and safe within the sanctity of their own families and that no rule or process currently or historically of any country shall infringe on and/or interfere with the unity of children and their families. We base this call to action on the traditions of all faiths in respect to the role of families as the fundamental building block of society.

We call on all who believe in our Quaker and human commitment to social justice to walk beside us in this journey by denouncing the zero tolerance immigration stance of the current U.S. administration as counter to social justice. We further, without hesitation, denounce any policy or process that separates infants and children from their families for political purposes. We ask for ongoing well-informed and well-directed communication with elected officials at the state and national levels to reject such policies and ask for them to step forward as leaders to develop a plan to re-unify children who have been separated from their families and to seek re-unification for those who have been separated over the course of the current crisis, as well as those who have been separated during previous administrations. We demand with our resources, voices and our votes that a fair, humane and compassionate immigration policy be developed and that it become the law of the land so that no other generation of children will ever face the trauma and tragedy facing so many currently. We cannot and will not tolerate the heart-breaking cries of children begging for the arms of their mothers and fathers a moment longer!

We are lifted up by this call for action by the Spirit that sees that of God in everyone and by these words from Quaker Bayard Rustin, who said, “Surely I must at all times attempt to obey the law of the state. But when the will of God and the will of the state conflict, I am compelled to follow the will of God.”