



National Conference Call April 6, 2009 Presenters' Notes

For more information on the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's grassroots work, please contact **Yvette Schock, Grassroots Coordinator, Interfaith Immigration Coalition**, yschock@umc-gbcs.org; or **Bill Mefford, Director of Civil and Human Rights Advocacy, UMC General Board of Church and Society**, bmefford@umc-gbcs.org

Table of Contents

- I. **Meeting with Your Members of Congress**—Kristin Kumpf, Assistant Organizing Director, Interfaith Worker Justice
- II. **Messaging and Publicizing your Neighbor to Neighbor visit**—Allison Johnson, Campaign Coordinator, Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- III. **Faith communities and the national movement in support of comprehensive immigration reform**—Mehrdad Azemun, Deputy Field Director, National Immigration Forum
- IV. **Commemorating the ICE raid in Postville, IA: How You Can Get Involved on Tuesday, May 12, 2009**—Sr. Mary McCauley, BVM
- V. **Immigration Legislative Update**—Jen Smyers, Associate for Immigration & Refugee Policy, Church World Service

I. Meeting with Your Members of Congress

Kristin Kumpf, Assistant Organizing Director, Interfaith Worker Justice

1. To request a meeting with a Member of Congress:
 - Call the office AND fax a signed letter asking for a meeting—be sure to include clear contact information where the member's office can reach you.
 - **Call daily to follow up**
 - **Take your request for a meeting to the office in person if necessary.**
 - If the Member is not available for a meeting, request to meet with their staffer who covers immigration—Building a long-term relationship with the staffer is important – often more successful than a brief meeting with a member.
2. Planning your meeting:
 - See the [Neighbor to Neighbor Handbook](#), available at the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition's website](#), for tips on how to plan a focused, effective meeting with your member.

- If this is the first time your group has met with a Member of Congress together, or if your Member is not supportive of comprehensive immigration reform, you may want to role play your meeting—ask yourselves the hard questions and think through how to answer them clearly and concisely.
- Send someone to scope out the area around the member’s office—think through where you will park, where you can meet ahead of time, etc.

4. The day of the meeting:

- Before the meeting, gather at a location off site, run through the plan for your meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page, then go to the members’ office together.
- Bring a folder with your materials and business cards to leave with your Member.

5. During the meeting:

- What is your “ask”? – What are your hopes for next steps after the meeting? - Don’t leave the meeting without laying those out, and presenting who will do the follow – up
- Regardless of their reaction, present an opportunity for next steps (i.e. a future meeting, an event, etc.)
- If you are caught off guard, don’t make information up – by saying, “I don’t know, but I’ll get back to you on that”, give you an opportunity for follow up

6. After the meeting:

- Make sure everyone is clear on who will be following up on what information

II. Messaging and Publicizing your Neighbor to Neighbor visit

Allison Johnson, Campaign Coordinator, Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

1) Messaging on your visit.

See the [Neighbor to Neighbor Handbook](#), available at the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s website](#), for tips on how to develop talking points and a clear, focused message on why you care about immigration reform. Overall message tone should be optimistic and positive, while communicating your firm commitment to the immigrant community and asking your member for the same.

If the member asks you what principles you support, you can use the 3 we included in the memo:

- A path to citizenship
- Family unity
- Worker’s Rights

2) Publicizing your visit- before and after.

Some of you might be asking, why should we spend time and energy reaching out to the media about this meeting? Our answer is that we should always be reaching out to the media, in traditional and non-traditional forms, to share about our work and expand the reach of our efforts.

I recommend reading through the memo available at the [IIC website](#), "[Neighbor to Neighbor Visits- Tips for Getting into the Media](#)" for full details about how you can effectively share your work through media.

You can pick and choose how you want to engage in this work- you can do any or all of the following activities, whatever you are comfortable with.

- 1) **During the meeting:** We're asking all groups to capture information from the meeting. Be sure to take good notes as to exactly what the member is committing to do, as well as take photos with your group and the Member at their offices. You'll want good notes to fill out your report-back form. Also, the notes you take will help to formulate a press release and other materials.
- 2) **After the meeting:** Reflect and report out to the media. This can be done in one of several ways:
 - a. **Write a blog.** A blog is a short, informal journal entry specifically written for an online audience. Blogs communicate quickly, and they are a simple way to get the word out. Compose a blog piece of around 400-500 words and send it to local blogs- for example, your local paper might have a companion website that features community blogs. Your denominational offices on the state or local level may have a blog as well.
 - b. **Write a press release.** In the memo, there is a sample press release you can adapt. When reporters read this release, they may call you for further information and also contact the member directly, which will create buzz. This should be sent to local media, reporters, etc. as soon after your meeting as possible
 - c. **Write a letter to the editor.** Many of you have done this in the past, and it is a great way to share information about your visit.
- 3) **Finally, no matter how you decide to publicize your visit, you will want to send any published materials to your Member of Congress. Send the news clippings, newsletter, or print-outs of a blog post to your Congress Member's local offices either by email or by fax.**

If you have any questions about how to publicize your visit, you can contact me, Allison, at ajohnson@sojo.net. **Send any blog post submissions after your visits to me as well, and I can help to have your blogs circulated among progressive faith blogs.**

III. Faith communities and the national movement in support of comprehensive immigration reform

Mehrdad Azemun, Deputy Field Director, National Immigration Forum

- The Interfaith Immigration Coalition is playing an important leadership role nationally: the interfaith vigils during the President's Day recess helped kick-start national momentum around the need to pass a just and humane immigration reform in 2009.
 - Many groups around the country have now arranged visits with Congressional offices. These groups include Latino, Asian and other immigrant groups, labor unions, community organizations, and immigrants' rights organizations.
 - As of today, including IIC's "Neighbor-to-Neighbor" visits, there are 219 visits during the April recess!
 - IIC's role, as before, is important, since the Coalition has capacity and committed people where others may not (that is, outside of cities and regions with many immigrants).
-

IV. Commemorating the ICE raid in Postville, IA—How You Can Get Involved on Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Sr. Mary McCauley, BVM

St. Bridget's Parish in Postville, Iowa plans a First Anniversary Commemoration of the immigration raid that took place at Agriprocessors, a kosher meat packing plant, on May 12, 2008. The prayer Vigil and walk will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 2009.

We suggest that this be a day for nationwide awareness of the need for comprehensive immigration reform, just labor practices, family unity and an end to raids.

Here's how you can be a part of this nationwide day of awareness, remembrance and solidarity:

1. We urge faith communities of all denominations to **sound a call for justice**, e.g., ringing of church bells or blowing of the shofar at 10:00 a.m., the time the raid began.
2. **Join us in prayer.** A copy of the prayer vigil that will be used in Postville and that can be adapted for your own community will be available after April 15 at www.postvillestbridget.org or by using your search engine and putting in Archdiocese of Dubuque Postville Relief.

3. **Individuals and towns are encouraged to don red ribbons** as we did in Postville on May 12, 2008, the day of the raid.

For further information on how your community can participate in the commemoration, please contact Katrine Herrick at 202-347-9797 ext. 204 or kherrick@networklobby.org.

Thank you for standing in solidarity with the 389 people and their families who were affected by this May 12 raid.

Immigration Legislative Update

Jen Smyers, Assoc. for Immigration & Refugee Policy, Church World Service

4 recent actions:

1. We were able to defeat E-verify from being made mandatory in the stimulus package; it was just reauthorized until September.
2. Liberians who are here in the U.S. have been granted DED (Deferred Enforced Departure) for 12 months.
3. The response to the Washington raid (the first during the Obama administration), was successful in that Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano issued an investigation of the raid, released many of those picked up, and has in essence placed a hold on planned raids.
4. Unfortunately, however, the House quickly introduced and passed HR 1029 (attached) which would punish those who "smuggle" in their own family members with at minimum one year in prison, among other things.

4 upcoming bills:

1. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians - see attached bill and letter;
2. Access to Justice Act - attached;
3. Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act - attached;
4. DREAM Act - attached bill, alert, and letter.

There's not a need to know all of these bills back and forth, since just voicing your support of humane and equitable immigration reform will signal your support for these types of bills. However, if you can weave them into your meeting and good first steps and part of the larger need for comprehensive immigration reform, that would be great. These actions and upcoming bills show that right now is the perfect time to be meeting with your senators and representatives, since these actions are on the table.