

## General Talking Points on Local Anti-Immigrant Initiatives

- Poll after poll shows that the American people are concerned about undocumented immigration and want action from the federal government. Americans are frustrated because they believe immigration is a problem and the government is not doing anything about it. Americans want a real **solution** to the problem, not more talk and not more election-year rhetoric.
- Anti-immigrant city ordinances divide our communities. An honest and constructive debate on immigration is indeed necessary. However, the debates surrounding these city ordinances have been ugly and divisive wars of words, feeding on fear, hatred, and misperceptions. We need a debate on real policy issues, not name-calling or demagoguery.
- Anti-immigrant city ordinances send a powerful and important message to lawmakers in Washington, DC – that the federal government must act on comprehensive immigration reform. However, they also have very serious negative consequences for the residents of the cities that pass them.
- Passing city ordinances that punish landlords who rent to undocumented immigrants and employers who hire unauthorized workers, make English the official language, and deny benefits to undocumented immigrants is not a solution to our immigration problems. Immigrants will not choose to return to their home countries as a result of these ordinances, and potential migrants will not choose to remain in their home countries. While these ordinances may temporarily pass the problem along to other communities, they do not resolve the underlying causes of undocumented immigration.
- While these ordinances do not have the intended effect of stopping undocumented immigration, they do present very harmful consequences for the immigrant community, the Latino community, and the entire American community. The negative consequences include discrimination, harassment, and civil rights violations against people who are suspected of being undocumented immigrants – often U.S. citizens and permanent residents – resulting in costly litigation. Ordinances can also lead to decreased public safety as community members fear reporting crimes to the police, decreased public health as community members are denied health care or fear seeking the health care they need, and dire consequences for individuals who do not speak English well and do not receive critical information in their native language in cases of emergencies.
- The U.S. immigration system is badly broken. While many U.S. cities have a financial burden due to increased numbers of immigrants in local schools and hospitals, creating a patchwork of different immigration policies in localities around the country will only make it worse. Only the federal government has the power to reform the nation's immigration system in a comprehensive and fundamental way.