



MCIRR Steering Committee
3030 S. 9th St. Suite 1B
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

April 8, 2019

Chairman Beau LaFave
Members of the Committee
House Committee on Military, Veterans and Homeland Security
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Opposition to Sanctuary Policy Prohibition Acts (HB 4083 & HB 4090)

Dear Members of the House Committee on Military, Veterans and Homeland Security:

The Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (MCIRR) was founded in 1987 and is a membership organization of approximately seventy nonprofit groups that serve immigrants and refugees statewide. MCIRR's mission is to coordinate educational and organizational efforts that build capacity within Michigan's immigrant advocacy community, support immigrants' rights in federal, state, and local policy, and promote a more positive and inclusive atmosphere for immigrants and refugees in Michigan.

We are writing to express our opposition to HB 4083 and HB 4090 for two reasons. First, these bills will facilitate discrimination on the basis of race. Race is an immutable characteristic bearing no necessary relationship to immigration status. Yet, race has been made the basis for unjustified assumptions concerning a person's legal status in this country. These assumptions create incentives for to engage in racial profiling activities that target individuals regardless of whether they are U.S. citizens, lawfully present, or undocumented. This consequence should concern our state because of Michigan's vibrant Latino/a, Arab American, and Asian American communities who frequently relate a common experience of being perceived as perpetually foreign regardless of immigration status or multigenerational history in the U.S.

We don't need to look any further than just a few months ago to see the inevitable result of this racial profiling. In December of last year, Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, a U.S. citizen and Marine who served as a lance corporal and tank crewman in Afghanistan, was reported to ICE. That federal agency had pressured our very own Kent County to send anyone they suspected might look like they were not a U.S. citizen to them. Jilmar looks Latino. Thus, the county was compelled to send this U.S. citizen to ICE solely on the basis of his allegedly foreign appearance for ICE's purposes. ICE did not even release Jilmar until days later after he had secured an attorney. This avoidable incident is an embarrassment to our state and a moral failure to our richly diverse communities.

Second, these bills undermine public trust and make communities less safe. Victims and witnesses of crime will be unwilling to cooperate with local and state police if they perceive that law enforcement agents are not there to protect their rights, but are instead a proxy deportation agency engaged in profiling. Indeed, multiple systematic studies using the FBI's own crime statistics have revealed that communities that choose to adopt sanctuary practices have less crime overall than communities that are anti-sanctuary. Ricardo D. Martínez-Schuldt & Daniel E. Martínez, *Sanctuary Policies and City-Level Incidents of Violence*, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (December 18, 2017). For this reason, HB 4083 HB 4090 will likely have the

MCIRR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1989. Learn more at www.MCIRR.org

unfortunate result of increasing crime throughout our state and reducing law enforcement's ability to solve and prevent crimes.

Please consider the effect these bills would have on local communities with immigrant residents and residents who may be perceived as foreign. Thank you for your leadership, service, and commitment to the public interest.

Sincerely,



Rebeca Ontiveros-Chavez, Esq.
Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights



Member Organizations of the Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (MCIRR)*

These groups are recognized as non-profit, religious, educational, or charitable organizations under the Internal Revenue Code that affirm the purpose and work of MCIRR. Eligible organizations may become members and individuals may become supporters!

JOIN MCIRR

The 313 Project
 Accounting Aid Society
 African Bureau for Immigration & Social Affairs (ABISA)
 Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
 Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership
 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan
 Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote Michigan (APIA-Vote Michigan)
 Arbor Circle Group
 Blue Water Safe Horizons
 Casa Latina- Ann Arbor
 Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan
 Catholic Diocese of Gaylord – Secretariat for Peace and Justice
 Catholic Services of Macomb – Immigration and Refugee Services Lapeer
 CODE Legal Aid, Inc.
 Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
 Diocese of Grand Rapids Immigration Legal Services
 Diocese of Kalamazoo Immigration Assistance Program
 Dominican Sisters - Grand Rapids
 Farmworker Legal Services
 Freedom House
 Garden of Dreams Preschool
 Garfield Park Neighborhood Association
 Hamtramck School Based Health Center
 Hispanic Center of Western Michigan
 Immigrant Connection at City Life Church
 International Affairs Center
 International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit

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Latin Americans United for Progress
 Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development
 Lakeshore Legal Aid, La Vida
 Legal Aid & Defender Association, Inc.
 Lemkin House, Inc.
 Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates
 SafeHouse Center
 Samaritas (formerly Lutheran Social Services of Michigan)
 Macomb International Service Center
 Mercy Health - Saint Mary's Clinic Santa Maria
 Mexican American Council, Inc.
 Migrant Legal Aid
 Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
 Michigan League for Public Policy
 Michigan State University College of Law Immigration Law Clinic
 Michigan UU Social Justice Network
 Noor's Heaven of West Michigan Services
 Oceana Hispanic Center
 Office of Social Justice (Christian Reform Church)
 Piast Institute
 Senior Neighbors
 Sisters Home Visitors of Mary
 Sisters of Mercy
 Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities Immigration Law Clinic
 Telamon Corporation
 The Immigrant Connection at City Life Church
 Thomas M. Cooley Law School Immigrant Rights and Civil Advocacy Clinic
 Thrive: A Refugee Support Program
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing
 University of Detroit Mercy - Immigration Law Clinic
 United Hispanic Workers of Detroit
 Voces Battle Creek
 Washtenaw Health Plan
 Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights
 Wayne State University Law School Asylum and Immigrant Law Clinic
 Workers' Center of West Michigan (Micah Center)
 Yoruba American Community
 YWCA Kalamazoo

*List current as of July 2, 2018

