

Latino Evangelical Leaders Rebuke Inflammatory & Racist Campaign Rhetoric

As Latino evangelical pastors, we stand in bold rebuke of the inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric and proposals used by certain political candidates to marginalize and harm Latino and other immigrant communities. Political and religious leaders who directly or tacitly endorse candidates who espouse this language violate the moral truths we hold dear.

The extreme statements that candidates have made in this election are not idle talk, they are direct threats to the communities we serve. Moreover, the suggestion to “round up” and deport 11 million people would leave millions of families broken and communities paralyzed by fear. No American child should go to school in the morning fearing that her hardworking mom and dad will be whisked away by federal agents before she returns home. As pastors, we already witness such tragedies as a result of our broken immigration system; stepped up mass deportations would increase the suffering on a staggering scale.

Other proposals made on the campaign trail, such as reversing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), would immediately put hundreds of thousands of young people who were brought to this country as children at risk of being deported to countries they have never known. Such needless dislocation is unjust.

In addition, rhetoric such as referring to Mexican-American immigrants as rapists, calling a ban on Muslim refugees fleeing violence, and endorsing torture practices have nurtured a climate of division that is detrimental to our democracy. Immigrant children in communities nationwide are already enduring xenophobic schoolyard taunts invoking the name of presidential candidates.

As shepherds of our community, we will not stand by in silence while our brothers, sisters, and neighbors are subjected to words and deeds that deny their human dignity and denigrate their families. Our Christian faith teaches us that our principles must triumph over partisanship. As Hispanic evangelical pastors and leaders, we believe that we cannot allow this rhetoric to remain unanswered.

We are monitoring political candidates for every office and will vocally oppose those who publicly endorse, espouse, or associate with xenophobia or racism. We will speak out just as loudly about candidates who remain silent while our community is attacked.

We expect better from our political leaders. We need real solutions, like a just immigration reform, not pandering or sacrificing our community for political gain. For all that Latinos contribute to America, candidates should be listening to our voices, not insulting and demeaning us. Any voices speaking in favor of candidates with xenophobic, misogynistic, or uncivil discourse do not speak for Latino evangelicals. The Gospel demands we speak up and we will.

In faith,

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