

February 14, 2017

HAND-DELIVERED to individual commissioners on February 15, 2017

Board of County Commissioners
Stephen P. Clark Government Center
111 NW 1st Street, Suite 220
Miami, Florida 33128

RE: Urgent letter from faith leaders regarding recent county actions in regards to immigration

Dear Commissioners:

As a community of immigrants, whether it be our neighbors, our congregants, or our families, we know that we are strongest when we stand together and lift up the most vulnerable among us. We are disheartened by the recent decision by Mayor Carlos Gimenez to overturn the detainer policy resolution unanimously adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2013. As a Board, you mindfully listened to financial, practical, and moral arguments as to why Miami-Dade County should not be engaged in a policy of blanket compliance with Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainers. Some of you commented on the satisfaction of being in a position to make social change, to not only save money, but to also save people. It is no more acceptable today to tear down bridges between people in the name of community security than it was in 2013.

We call on you, our commissioners, to safeguard our families and our neighbors, to stand firm in your 2013 decision to protect Miami-Dade residents from the detrimental effects of ICE detainers. Many of the individuals affected by the mayor's change in policy fled violence and abject poverty. For them, the mayor's decision could be the difference between life and death. For others, the decision could result in families being torn apart, in children growing up with only one parent or perhaps neither. You, as our commissioners, have the opportunity to protect these residents of Miami-Dade County. We ask that you continue to exercise respect for human and civil rights by safeguarding the integrity of our diverse community and upholding your 2013 decision.

We embrace the faith principle of welcoming the stranger, and we call on you, our county commissioners, to advance policies that are inclusive and welcoming and that strengthen local protections for affected members of our community.

Respectfully,

The Venerable Canon Dr. J. Fritz Bazin
Archdeacon for Immigration and
Social Justice
Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida

Randolph P. McGroarty
Executive Director
Catholic Legal Services

Rabbi Solomon Schiff
Rabbinical Association of Greater
Miami

Rabbi Alan E. Litwak
Temple Sinai of North Dade

Reverend Priscilla Felisky Whitehead
United Church of Christ Minister

The Most Rev. Steven M. Roszczewski
Diocesan Bishop
Diocese of Florida
Communion of Synodal Catholic
Churches

Imam Bilal Karakiva
Islamic School of Miami

The Reverend Martha M. Shiverick
Pastor
Riviera Presbyterian Church

Eduardo Diaz
Miami Friends Meeting

The Reverend Frank J. Corbishley
St. Bede Episcopal Chapel

Bishop Chuck Leigh
Communion of Synodal Catholic
Churches

Valerie Jonas
Temple Beth Sholom

Reverend Diane Shoaf
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Rabbi Moshe Thomas Heyn
Temple Israel of Greater Miami

The Reverend Dr. Laurinda Hafner
Senior Pastor
Coral Gables Congregational Church
UCC

The Rev. Dr. R. Steven Hudder
United Church of Christ Pastor
Christ Congregational Church

Roberta Shevin
Executive Director
MCCJ

The Very Reverend Willie Allen-
Faiella, Rector
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Rabbi Gayle Pomerantz
Temple Beth Sholom

The Reverend Jo-Ann Murphy
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Rev. José Manuel Capella-Pratts
Pastor
First Spanish Presbyterian Church

Lorenzo Canizares
Our Lady of Lourdes

Rabbi Frederick L Klein
Rabbinical Association of Greater
Miami

The Reverend Corinna Olson
Priest-in-charge
St. Luke the Physician Episcopal
Church

The Reverend Andreas M. Thode
Living Faith Lutheran Church

The Reverend Canon Mark Sims
Rector
St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal
Church

The Reverend Megan Smith
Associate Minister
Coral Gables Congregational
Church UCC

Jeanette Smith
Executive Director
South Florida Interfaith Worker
Justice

Tom Comerford
Founder, Sacred Heart Outreach
Center
Board Member, Catholic Charities
Board Member, Three Virtues

Kathy Hersh, Clerk
Miami Friends Meeting

Reverend Janet Horman
United Methodist Church
Florida Conference

Reverend Harold Thompson
Miami Beach Community Church

Allison A. Anderson, Deacon
Riviera Presbyterian Church

Reverend Toni Saul
Interfaith Minister

Reverend Kim Robles
Miami Shores Presbyterian Church

Mary Comerford
Sacred Heart Outreach Center

Isabelle Hill
Riviera Presbyterian Church

Michelle Muñiz
Director
DOOR Miami
First Spanish Presbyterian Church

Danny Morales
Board Chair of DOOR Miami
Pastor of Ukirk Ministries at
University of Miami

The Very Reverend Dom Daniel
Medina, OSB(SL), OCR, DMin, EdD
Prior
Banyan Abbey