



## **Strangers No Longer**

### **Platform to Affirm Human Dignity**

- 1) Ability to Drive** - *To support themselves and their families, immigrants need to be able to drive. The right to get a driver's license without proof of citizenship was allowed in Michigan until it was rescinded in 2008 by the Attorney General of Michigan. The Michigan legislature then passed legislation that codified this into law.*
  - a) Support (and press your region's State Legislators to support) MI Senate Bill 433 and MI House Bill 4835 which provide the ability to get a driver's license without proof of permanent residency. Notice: This state ID will not enable voting.
  
- 2) Identification** - *Undocumented residents of Michigan need to provide identification in many places such as doctor's offices, school districts, pharmacies, and banks. Currently state ID is not available to them.*
  - a) Support MI Senate Bill 434 and MI House Bill 4836 which provide the ability to get a state identification card without proof of permanent residency. Notice: This state ID will not enable voting.
  
- 3) Government Services** - *Immigrants who need to interact with government offices often experience the frustration of being unable to communicate with officials and advocate for their rights. Undocumented immigrants are not allowed to work legally which makes providing for themselves and their families very difficult.*
  - a) Provide language interpretation (verbal) and written translation services at county, state, and local municipality offices.
  - b) Expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility classifications (under Food and Nutrition Act) to include asylum applicants as an eligible category of noncitizens.
  - c) Following California State Legislature's model, (Senate Bill 4654), expand eligibility for Michigan Assistance Programs such as FAP (Food Assistance Program) to persons regardless of immigration status.
  
- 4) Legal Support** - *Immigrants need competent and affordable legal advice as they make their way through our immigration system. Unfortunately, many immigrants end up spending hard earned money on inadequate legal help.*
  - a) Ensure that adequate, affordable legal aid is available for people in all stages of the immigration process.

- b) Promote the expansion of translation for all legal services through the building of partnerships with business members, volunteers, and nonprofits who can provide language assistance.

**5) Employment** - *Immigrants are a crucial part of the U.S. workforce. But U.S policy does not protect undocumented immigrant workers and makes them vulnerable to unfair employment practices.*

- a) All immigrant and migrant workers, documented and undocumented, should be protected under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- b) Create county and city ombudsman positions so that immigrants, regardless of immigration status, can report unfair labor practices by employers.
- c) Allow asylum applicants to apply for work permits once they apply for Asylum, rather than having to wait 6 months to apply.

**6) Health / Medical Services** - *Michigan has an emergency services policy known as ESO (Emergency Services Only) that mandates care for all people seeking care, regardless of immigration status. For undocumented residents this is the only medical care available to them.*

- a) Recognizing the unique role of emergency physicians, build immigration-informed Emergency Departments using the National Institute of Health (NIH) suggested immigration informed interventions. Develop a network/partnership of local immigration-focused Emergency Department provider groups.
- b) Provide language interpretation services in all hospitals, urgent care facilities, and emergency rooms.
- c) Expand outpatient mental health services to provide for the needs of foreign language speaking patients.
- d) Provide a state ID so that immigrants can legally access health/medical/dental services and legally fill prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.

**7) Housing** - *Undocumented immigrants are often vulnerable to unethical landlords. Fear of being deported keeps many from asserting their rights as renters.*

- a) As allowed by Federal Law, amend Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services guidelines for LIHEAP (formerly Low Income Home Energy Assistance) to include as qualified non-citizens resident asylum applicants, whose incomes fall within designated eligibility requirements.
- b) Create local ombudsman positions so that immigrant tenants, regardless of their immigration status, can report unfair practices by landlords.

- c) Amend Federal, State, and local government Landlord Tenant Laws to mandate that Required Landlord Disclosures be provided to the renter in their native language.

**8) Schools -** *Immigrant parents and students have the daunting task of learning English while they struggle to build new lives and deal with the trauma of leaving their homelands. According to the Michigan Department of Education, schools must offer an ELL (English Language Learners) program to all LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students and provide this help until they are proficient in English. But more can be done to create a welcoming environment for immigrant parents and students.*

- a) Hire an appropriate number of staff, teachers, and counselors that reflect the languages that are spoken by the student population.
- b) Provide interpretation at meetings and gatherings for parents who do not speak English.

**9) Police Interaction -** *Documented and undocumented immigrants report being stopped by police unfairly and are in constant fear of having their immigration status reported to immigration agencies unnecessarily.*

- a) Michigan police departments do not publish data of all traffic stops by race. In the interest of tracking and eliminating discriminatory traffic stops, regularly collect and publish data of all stops, by race, including those that do not result in citations.
- b) When immigrants who are not proficient in English interact with police they are at a disadvantage. Police departments should train officers to communicate effectively with the non-English speaking public by using internal or independent translation services. Police departments should not rely on immigration enforcement agencies such as ICE or the Border Patrol for interpretation services.
- c) Public safety officers should not be allowed to collect information about immigration status or report immigration status to immigration agencies such as ICE or the Border Patrol.
- d) Require law enforcement officers to complete training on legally acceptable forms of identification, including foreign driver's license and other identity documents.