



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Damaris Velasquez, 617-962-3417
dlopez@agenciaalpha.org

Faith and Community Leaders to hold Vigil & Rally
“Mourning Our Legislators’ Moral Failure & Demanding Action”
at MA State House on Tuesday, July 24

WHEN & WHERE: On Tuesday, July 24, we will assemble at the Grand Staircase on the 2nd floor of the State House at 12 noon. Please arrive by 11:30 or earlier to allow time to pass through security.

WHO: Clergy, community leaders, and families from ECCO, MIRA, Agencia ALPHA, COPAHNI, Pioneer Valley Worker Center, MCAN, Massachusetts Safe Communities Coalition and other community, faith-based, and advocacy groups.

WHAT: Vigil & Rally: Mourning Our Legislators’ Moral Failure & Demanding Action – Protect Immigrant Families in MA NOW!



BOSTON, Mass. – Massachusetts legislators released the MA FY2019 Budget Bill this past week and failed to include four basic protections for immigrant families that had been included in the initial MA Senate version. We are deeply disappointed and outraged by the MA Legislators’ lack of action, particularly in the face of increasing attacks on our immigrant brothers and sisters, that have had traumatizing effects on children and their families.

On Tuesday, July 24, clergy, community leaders, concerned community members and immigrant families from Agencia ALPHA and COPAHNI will join their voices with others from across the state at [Mourning Our Legislators' Moral Failure & Demanding Action - Vigil & Rally: Protect Immigrant Families NOW!](#) We will observe a moment of silence, mourning the lack of action, leadership and compassion exhibited by many legislators in their failure to enact protections for immigrant families in MA. We will deliver black ribbons and our message to our legislators and demand immediate action to pass protections for immigrant families before the end of this legislative session, July 31.

“The Church can’t afford to stay quit, it needs to take a stand on behalf of the immigrant families, especially when the separation of families is not only taking place at the border and it is not a recent event. Our families in Massachusetts have been separated by the hundreds of people who have been

deported at our cities during all these years. Hundreds of children have been left behind here in our own State and as ambassadors of Christ we can't take this lightly. For that reason we ask Speaker DeLeo to reconsider his decision before it is too late" declared Damaris Velasquez, Director of Programs of Agencia ALPHA.

We are calling on state elected officials to act this last week of the legislative session to pass provisions of the Safe Communities Act which provide basic protections for community members, including barring police inquiries about immigration status, ensuring basic due process for immigrants, ending collaboration between local sheriffs and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and banning registries based on country of origin or religion.

"Not passing the amendments places our immigrant community in a very vulnerable place. They can be victims of racial profiling, hate crimes or actions, domestic violence, and any other type of crime where they will fear to approach the local police to seek help and protection.

This lack of leadership from the Representatives also places our local police officers in a hard situation, adding an extra burden to their shoulders and braking the little communication and trust that they might have with the community that they serve".

Brought to you by Agencia ALPHA, Essex County Community Organization (ECCO), and Pioneer Valley Worker Center and cosponsored by Episcopal City Mission, MCAN-Massachusetts Community Action Network, MIRA-Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Neighbor to Neighbor Lynn, and Salem No Place for Hate.