**FAST FOR FAMILY UNITY**

**NOVEMBER 12TH- DECEMBER 12TH**

**FAITH ROOTED ESCALTION FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**FAITH TOOLKIT**

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**1) Context**

While the Senate passed its bi-partisan immigration reform bill S. 744, there has been little action in the House of Representatives to move forward on immigration. Even with enough votes to pass an immigration bill, leadership has stalled. Faith communities from all backgrounds have continued to mobilize and advocate. More than 10,000 people of faith committed to the [FAST Action, 40 days Prayer and Fasting for Immigration Reform](http://fastaction.us). As the fast came to a close on October 18th, the need for action and escalation is only growing as we approach a shrinking timeline for legislation. We must continue to lift up the moral imperative of passing immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship now as people of faith from all traditions join labor, immigrant and community leaders in setting the moral compass and raising our voices for immigration reform.

**2) Fast for Family Unity**

Fasting has been part of religious traditions for thousands of years, as a form of purification, re-focusing spiritually, and finding new vision. It is also part of the prophetic tradition to give public witness to injustice and speak truth to power. For our purposes, fasting has also been used to facilitate political change – one example being César Chávez’s 25-day fast for migrant grape workers’ rights in 1968. The model of a political fast can vary according to the campaign goals. Below is the model currently being developed for immigration reform, which describes a “rolling fast,” which is a fast that is “passed” from one person (or persons) to another to reduce the danger to any one person and increase the number of participants in the fast.

Those who are not participating in the fast itself can support through daily prayer services and daily activities that will be happening to support the fasters. At the grassroots level we will work to hold solidarity actions, vigils and prayer services in cities throughout the country.

**3) Fast for Family Unity in Washington DC on Capitol Hill**

Beginning November 12th, many leaders are committing to fast as long as they are able on Capitol Hill, pitching a tent and camping out with high-level labor and faith leaders along with community members and immigrant leaders. Below there is a description in detail about the nature of the DC Fast for Family Unity.

* This fast will take place on Capitol Hill to visibly draw the attention of decision makers and bring a prophetic witness to the place of power.
* We will pitch tents outside so that the fast is public and visible. There will be a space for fasters to have their own tent, and a separate community support tent for all those coming to show support, lift up prayers, or fast for a day.
* Leaders will fast as long as they are able from November 12 to December 12th, but will not put their lives at risk, and when they are no longer able, other leaders will rotate in as we continue the fast for 30 days.

**4) Solidarity Actions in the Field**

Grassroots and field partners are invited to be part of the fast, either by holding shorter 24-hour fasts / protests outside of key decision makers’ offices, or by hosting solidarity events and vigils. Congress will be in session Nov 12-22and December 4-20

* Join the DC Fast:Come join the DC Fast for Family Unity on Capitol Hill. Financial assistance is available to help with travel and accommodations, contact nandersen@cwsglobal.org for more details.
* Create solidarity press conference, fast events or prayer vigils to help make a national launch on November 12thand put continued pressure on decision makers.
* [Neighbor to Neighbor Visits:](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/IIC_NEIGHBOR_to_NEIGHBOR_Toolkit_01.pdf) Meet with your local member of Congress and tell them about your commitment through fasting in solidarity with DC Fast for Immigrant Justice
* [Prayer vigils](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/IIC_Prayer_Vigil_Toolkit_01.18.13.pdf) in front of local Congressional offices: Organize local prayer vigils and solidarity events with faith leaders, labor and immigrant leaders in your area.
* Fast for a day in front of your State Capitol - Starting November 12th in each key target State: Coordinate or join a full day event in front of your State Capitol to fast, share stories and host a vigil in support of the nationwide movement for immigration reform.
* Individual fasting for 24-48 hours: Get the word out about the nationwide fast and solidarity events by encouraging people to share videos through Facebook and other social networks and blogs.
* Procession or Pilgrimage to MOC’s office to deliver prayers and petitions: Faith leaders, community organizations and labor partners carry religious symbols and process through their town to their Representative’s district office and deliver a sign-on letter, hand written prayers or post-cards they’ve previously collected.

**5) Other Ways to Support DC Fast**

For those leaders who are not make such an extraordinary commitment because of scheduling there will be plenty of other ways to support the ongoing Fast on Capital Hill in DC

* Join in the regular prayer services, vigils, press conferences and other religious rites held on Capitol Hill in to lift up and support the Fast for Immigrant Justice.
* Daily visitors to include public notables, civil rights leaders, past fasters, Members of Congress, etc
* Media outreach to ensure that the voices of those fasting are heard in by the public and that the fast is successful in elevating our advocacy for immigration reform
* Social Media posts with art and photos showing support for the fasters and having constituents tweet @ their member of congress

**6) Timeline: November 12- December 12**

Beginning November 12th the DC Fast will go until December 12th. This is in conjunction with the Congressional calendar wherein the House of Representatives is in session beginning November 12th. They will break for Thanksgiving, but the DC fast will continue with the most dedicated members which can add to the dramatic tension the fast will create. Congress will be back from Thanksgiving break starting December 4th.

**7) Message**

* Messaging will be faith-driven focusing on the moral imperative to act for genuine immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship
* We fast not out of anger or despair, but out of hope to strengthen our commitment to continue the struggle for common sense immigration reform
* We hope to change the hearts of legislators by demonstrating the suffering caused by a broken immigration system and compel them to take action to remedy this hurtful system
* We will fast and stand in solidarity as long as our bodies will allow us

**8) Earned Media**

**Sample Local Media Advisory**

**FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**

CONTACT: Name, cell, email

[CITY] leaders join national fast to pressure Congress to pass genuine immigration reform

*[CITY/EVENT] AT [LOCATION]*

*[DATE/TIME]*

As Congress continues to stall any action on immigration reform, [CITY] faith, immigrant rights and labor leaders are escalating the pressure on [ONE OR TWO REPS NAMES] to lead on passing immigration reform. On [DATE], leaders in [CITY] are joining the National Fast for Family Unity to stand in solidarity with the millions of families impacted by our nation’s unjust immigration system.

The [EVENT/PRESS CONFERENCE/VIGIL/ACTION] at [TIME/LOCATION] will feature local faith, immigrant and labor leaders including [NAMES] calling for action and a path to citizenship for 11 million aspiring Americans. As the Obama administration continues to deport more than 1,100 people every day, the toll on American families is a moral stain.

[QUOTE ON URGENCY FROM ONE LOCAL LEADER]

The CITY event joins a larger fast by leaders across the country, including the month-long fast centered at a tent on Capitol Hill including [RELEVANT NAMES]. National leaders are fasting for as long as their bodies will allow to demonstrate solidarity with families who are suffering and to compel House leaders to act.

While the Senate passed its bi-partisan immigration reform bill S. 744, there has been little action in the House of Representatives to move forward on immigration. Even with enough votes to pass an immigration bill with a path to citizenship, House leadership continues to stall any progress towards genuine reform.

**WHERE:** [LOCATION]

**WHEN:** [DATE/TIME]

**VISUALS:**

* List the visuals that will interview photographers and television media. Include references to banners, posters, photographs of separated or lost family members, religious symbols and clothing, and other things that will create interesting and strong visuals for the media

**SPONSORED BY:**

[LIST NAMES OF ALL SPONSORING ORGANZATIONS]

**CONTACT:** Name, cell, email

**Sample Op-Eds and Blogs**

* Rev. John McCullough CEO of Church World Service “One Government Activity Continues: 1,100+ Deportations a Day”<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-mccullough/one-government-activity-continues_b_4037736.html>
* Rev. Peter Morales, President of Unitarian Universalist Assocation, “While Government Shuts Down, Immigration Reform Steps Up” Huff PO <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-peter-morales/while-government-shuts-do_b_4064234.html>
* Lutheran Immigration Service DC, ELCA Pastor Rev. Michael Wilker “Immigration Reform Hopes Rise as 40-Day Fast Ends” <http://blog.lirs.org/immigration-reform-fast/>

**9) Social Media**

**Micro Website-**

* Please see our simple micro-site to allow for easy social sharing, promotion and resources (This will be released shortly)

**Sample Facebook Post:**

Please Post on your personal and organizational Facebook Pages

* English: I’m fasting for immigrant justice along with leaders camping on Capitol Hill. [#ImmigrationReform](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23immigrationreform) is a moral imperative! Check out: http://microsite
* Spanish: Ayuno para justicia para inmigrantes juntos con lideres en DC, #immigrationreform es un imperativo moral. http://microsite

**Sample Tweets:**

* Common hash tag for fast is #\_\_\_\_\_ (#fast4jfamilies, #fast4immigrants)
* English: Prayer, Fasting and Action continues on Capitol Hill [#ImmigrationReform](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23immigrationreform) is a moral imperative w/ [@SEIU](https://twitter.com/SEIU) [@interfaithimm](https://twitter.com/interfaithimm) [#timiesnow](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23timiesnow) #commonhashtag http://microsite
* Spanish: Oracion, ayuno y accion continua en la DC para #immigrationreform pase con @SEIU, @interfaithimm, es un imperativo moral #timeisnow

**Sample Videos on Fasting**

* We invite you to make a short two minute YouTube video with your testimony about why you are fasting (similar to Marco Grimaldo’s testimony from the Virginia Interfaith Center) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwGCuQKvHys&feature=em-upload\_owner

**Social Media Graphics:**

* Develop/distribute simple, sharable Facebook and Twitter visual media to bring visual focus in the run-up to the November 12 start date
* Develop ongoing graphics from quality photos of the Capitol Hill and grassroots actions

**@ Targeted Representatives Twitter Handles:**

* (List Rep Twitter Handle hear)

**Additional English Tweets:**

* I’m joining the #(commonhashtag to be released) with leaders camping on Capitol Hill. #TimeIsNow for #ImmigrationReform! Check out http://microsite - (still being developed)