



The Episcopal Church  
Office of Government Relations

ISSUE 4, SEPTEMBER 2009

The Episcopal Church and the  
**REFORM IMMIGRATION FOR AMERICA Campaign**

JOIN THE ADVOCACY IMMIGRATION NETWORK!  
SEND AN EMAIL TO:  
AWHITE@EPISCOPALCHURCH.ORG

As part of the Episcopal Church’s commitment to “welcome the stranger” as a matter of Christian responsibility, the Church announces that it has joined the **Reform Immigration for America Campaign**. The public policy positions of the Church regarding immigrants and refugees draw inspiration from that

quires long term solutions; a rational and humane approach to the undocumented population; protect U.S. and immigrant workers; allocate sufficient visas to close unlawful migration channels; enhance our nation’s security and safety; promote immigrant integration; and protect fundamental rights for all (you can

tral piece of our immigration system; **humane enforcement of immigration laws**; and should provide a **legalization process that has integration as its goal**. The Episcopal Church has been a forceful advocate on behalf of refugees, immigrants, and other at-risk groups. Our goal is to serve the least of those among us

REFORM IMMIGRATION  
**FOR America**

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Gospel and are based on the resolutions passed at the General Convention and Executive Council. In the 111th Congress, the Church will continue its work for fair and humane immigration reform to fix the existing broken system. It is a system that separates families, spreads fear and keeps millions living in the shadows. Reform Immigration for America looks to promote comprehensive immigration reform based in some key principles: immigration reform must be comprehensive; long term reform re-

quires long term solutions; a rational and humane approach to the undocumented population; protect U.S. and immigrant workers; allocate sufficient visas to close unlawful migration channels; enhance our nation’s security and safety; promote immigrant integration; and protect fundamental rights for all (you can access the campaign principles at the campaign’s website [www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org](http://www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org) These principles are in line with the policies of the Episcopal Church that support comprehensive immigration reform. **Reform Immigration for America** promotes immigration reform for America’s Families, for America’s Workers; for America’s Economy; and for America’s Security. Humane immigration reform will need to ensure, among other issues, **family unity** as a cen-

and to welcome the stranger by carrying forth the voice of refugees, immigrants, and other at-risk uprooted groups for whom protection through better public policy is needed. **TAKE ACTION TODAY:** Local Organizations and Dioceses: **JOIN** the Reform Immigration for America Campaign [www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org](http://www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org) Individuals: **JOIN** the Reform Immigration for America Updates email list at [www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org](http://www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org)

## IMMIGRATION AT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH GENERAL CONVENTION

The 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church took place this month in Anaheim, California. Thousands of Episcopalians gather to discuss the future of the Church, its mission and to adopt important resolutions. On immigration issues there were two resolutions passed. Both of them are very important to guide us in our work on the issue.



### *The resolutions are the following:*

#### **Resolution B006-2009: Immigration: Economic Justice Implications**

##### **Title: Immigration: Economic Justice Implications**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention recognize that all people living in the United States are entitled to protection provided by due process of law and that all immigrants and their families are entitled to receive protection granted by our laws and Constitution; and be it further *Resolved*, That the General Convention call for a moratorium on roadside checkpoints and raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at work sites, transportation systems, community gatherings, places of worship, lawful assemblies and private residences leaving families torn apart and children parentless and negatively affecting businesses, workers, and communities; and be it further *Resolved*, That the General Convention advocate for a return of congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform which will allow millions of undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents

and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization and to full social and economic integration in to the United States; and be it further *Resolved*, That the General Convention deplore conditions found in immigration detention centers and the over-reliance on a costly prison-like detention system for immigrants, and urge the uses of alternatives to detention, and calls for accountability and oversight to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care and sanitary conditions; and be it further *Resolved*, That the General Convention call for termination of any program which allows or funds local enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law, and return that enforcement to Federal Immigration Agents, leaving local law enforcement agencies the work of keeping communities safe and dedicating their resources to that end, and provide for a sense of safety for immigrant victims of crimes to come forward and report without fear of detention and deportation, and be it further

*Resolved*, That in as much as youth are a priority of the Episcopal Church, the 76th General Convention support the provision of conditional legal status for undocumented youth who arrived as infants and/or children and have grown up as members of our communities and schools, providing for them the opportunity to pursue higher education and/or serve the United States so they can become full contributing members of our communities and could eventually become U.S. Citizens.

#### **Resolution D076- 2009: Immigration: Support for Immigration Equality of Same-Sex Couples**

##### **Title: Support for Immigration Equality for Same-Sex Couples**

*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church urge that the leadership of both Houses of Congress assure fairness in immigration and specifically provide immigration equality for same-sex couples by permitting a citizen or permanent resident alien to sponsor an immigrant partner for permanent residence in the United States.

# Health Care Reform & Immigration

## Health Care Reform & Immigration

### Separating Fact From Fiction

The recent debate over U.S. health care reform, mostly regarding H.R. 3200 (America's Affordable Health Choices Act), has generated some misinformation, catching our attention. In particular, misrepresentations and misunderstandings about the U.S. immigrant population have resulted in an attempt by some critics to combine the subjects of health care reform and immigration.

#### MYTH:

A public health care coverage option would entitle undocumented immigrants to publicly funded health insurance

#### FACTS:

- Undocumented immigrants are barred from participating in federally-funded, means-tested programs such as Welfare, Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP.
- Since 1996 Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) are barred for five years from accessing those benefits.
- This law, known as the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, is still in effect today.

Furthermore, according to the language of H.R. 3200, Section 246 of the bill affirms the following:

*Nothing in this subtitle shall allow Federal payments for affordability credits on behalf of individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States.*

In other words, if H.R. 3200 becomes law, undocumented immigrants would still not have access to any publicly funded insurance programs, such as the proposed insurance "Exchange", Medicare, Medicaid or SCHIP. Also, a newly proposed amendment to H.R. 3200 would extend the five year waiting period

for legal permanent residents to have access to these programs. It is true that regardless of what happens when Congress returns from recess, undocumented immigrants will not be turned away at emergency rooms for urgent, life stabilizing treatment in the U.S. This is legal precedent, which the Episcopal Church supports on ethical and humanitarian grounds. Because this "hot-button" rumor about health care reform centers around the immigrant population, we also feel it is important to clear up one of the central myths you may have heard about immigrants.

#### MYTH:

A public health insurance option would subsidize a population of immigrants who

- "don't pay taxes"
- "cheat the system"

#### FACTS:

- both documented and undocumented immigrants contribute **billions** of dollars each year to
- Social Security and Medicare
- State, federal, property and income taxes

While immigrants will not be able to receive public health care benefits if H.R. 3200 becomes law, we still feel it is unfair for false statements to be spread about the immigrant population for political purposes. For more facts and figures about immigrants, please check out the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform's "Facts and Figures" page at [http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/facts\\_figures.html](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/facts_figures.html).

As you may know, the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations is the link for advocacy between the faith community of the Episcopal Church and our legislators. We monitor the legislative issues that deeply affect the human condition, such as health care, and we urge our legislators to take actions that match our Baptismal Covenant's call to "strive for justice and peace, and respect the dignity of every human being". The fact that millions of Americans have no access to affordable primary health care gravely concerns the faith community, and we are urging our Representatives and Senators to address this by passing needed health care reform, such as H.R. 3200, immediately. For example, now that Congress is nearly back in session, the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church has lent the Church's voice to the issue of health care reform. The members of this year's convention voted to support "universal access to health care" in the U.S. for all Americans. You can lend your voice, too, by contacting the Congressional legislators from your area by phone, letter, or email.

We at the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations hope this article has cleared up some of the myths you may have heard about the intersection of immigration and health care reform this summer. If H.R. 3200 is passed into law, U.S. taxpayer dollars would still not support any public health insurance programs for undocumented immigrants, but *would* provide health care coverage to the millions of American citizens who are currently without health insurance. Please join us in our advocacy efforts.

**By Jan Neumann**

## BEAMS OF HOPE

### *Comprehensive Immigration Reform renewed hope*

#### THE HUMAN FACE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM, ENFORCEMENT AND POLICY (Part 1)

The Episcopal Church has made several statements on immigration reform and a resolution (B006) proposed and endorsed by our own bishops in the Diocese of Olympia, and passed by the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, calls for return of a Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill to congress. B006 also calls for termination of some of the harsh treatment and enforcement measures non –criminal workers and families are facing. Here are some of the stories from members of our own congregations in the Diocese of Olympia.

#### **FABIOLA’S STORY”DEPORTED”**

Fabiola, a single mother was applying for a job as a groom at a local stable when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents showed up. Fabiola was swept up in this raid which detained 15 people. Fabiola recalls being locked in a van for over four hours with no open windows, another woman in the van was ill and at the point of passing out before they were attended to. Fabiola’s three year old daughter, Juanita was left with her child care providers and they had no idea where Fabiola was – it was not until the next day that they received official word. The community of St. Matthew/San Mateo through the work of the Jubilee Center was able to create enough public awareness of the situation facing all 15 people and the need for funds for bond money and legal fees. One week later, Fabiola was released, two weeks later, she ended up in the hospital with near kidney failure related, stated the physician to dehydration which began when she was detained in the Northwest Detention Center. There were still faded bruises on her arm and upper chest from bruising incurred during her arrest.

It took two years for Fabiola’s case to be heard in Immigration Court and she was ordered deported. Juanita, now five went with her. Juanita is not coping in Mexico and cries daily for the extended family left

behind, and for her native English language. She will return to the United States sometime during August of 2009. Fabiola has not found employment in Mexico and cannot provide food and clothing for Juanita. Their story is among thousands of parents and children separated by citizenship and immigration enforcement. (*Juanita was baptized at St. Matthew/San Mateo in the Spring of 2007*)

#### **RENE AND MARIA’S STORY “LIVING IN LIMBO”**

Some may recall Rene and Maria, they were declared a family in Sanctuary at the announcement of the New Sanctuary Movement on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Saint Mark’s Cathedral was the host as the New Sanctuary Movement was announced in Seattle.

Rene and Maria have been members of St. Matthew/San Mateo in Auburn since their 9 year old daughter was a month old, and their 6 year old son was born into the parish family. Their family life was rocked on March 15<sup>th</sup> of 2007 when Rene, a groomer for a local race track was swept up in an immigration raid. He worked each year on a work visa, and in this particular year, application for permanent residency had been made. His work permit had expired, but he was assured that paper work had simply crossed, and in reality he was temporarily without a work authorization. Rene spent over a week in detention, and the price of his bond (paid by his employer) was \$15,000.00. It was several months before he could return to work as the visa paper work was being straightened out. The family subsided on the minimum wages Maria earns working at a fast food restaurant. Rene’s case is under appeal, he could be called into immigration court at a moment’s notice and told to leave the country. In the mean time, Maria and Rene try to

go on with their life. Rene is a member of the vestry, Maria prepares families for baptism and both of them are profoundly part of the parish community.

**By Dianne Aid, TSSF  
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#### **BEAMS OF HOPE**

In June of 2009, over 800 advocates including members of the New Sanctuary Movement and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition gathered for a week in Washington D.C. to organize our work for Comprehensive Immigration Reform this year. We visited senators and representatives with our messages, we have faxed and called. It seems the movement is picking up steam. We are told by our congressional members, and by Janet Napolitano that government does pay attention to the numbers of calls, faxes and e mails they receive. We are getting better at organizing around these types of communications, and ask all who are touched by the plight of immigrant families in our midst to join in the call.

The New Sanctuary Movement offers hospitality and protection, it offers standing in solidarity with immigrant brothers and sisters, it looks to Scripture for guidance on treatment of immigrants – the Hebrew concept that an alien among us is to be treated as a citizen. We recognize that Sarah and Abraham were immigrants, the tribes of Israel went down to Egypt when there was starvation in their own land, and we remember that Mary and Joseph sought sanctuary in Egypt after Jesus birth.

There are many things that individuals and congregations can do to reach out to the immigrants in our midst. Please contact us for ideas and further conversation.

# TAKING ACTION ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

Summer/ Fall 2009



## PRAYER VIGILS CAMPAIGN IN JUNE

In June more than 50 communities of faith gathered in churches and on the streets all over the country to pray for our elected leaders as they work to move comprehensive immigration reform forward. Several Episcopal Churches organized prayer vigils: St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn, WA; St. John's, Bisbee, AZ; Grace Cathedral, CA etc.



and humanely. Among those speaking at the event: Rabbi Darryl Crystal, KAM Isaiah Israel, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, Chicago, IL; Rev. Simon Bautista, Latino Missioner for the Episcopal Diocese of Washington; Fr. Robert Wotjek, Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd, Bull Run Unitarian Universalist in Manassas, VA.

Neighbor to Neighbor in-district meetings, and collaborating with other congregations and hosting Breaking Bread and Barriers town hall meetings with member of Congress. The focus is to mobilize faith communities in strategic states and districts to have contact with Members of Congress and urge their support for comprehensive immigration reform in the fall. The good news is that we have 85 confirmed events throughout the country. Events started in late July and will continue through October, so you have time to join us in this effort. We want to continue to send a strong message through the fall on immigration reform and the urgency of the need for reform. The healthcare debate (at the local level and in the media) is a reminder of the hard road we have ahead if we want to get CIR this session. We need to coordinate, collaborate and make sure that faith groups are a strong voice for immigration reform. Join faith communities throughout the country taking action for immigration reform!!! Below are all the materials you need to plan any of these events – now just add your creativity and determination!



## PRAYER VIGIL IN WASHINGTON DC

Numerous religious leaders prayed for urgency and action on immigration reform on Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at the historic Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. Approximately 150 people of faith gathered to pray for President Obama and Congress to have the courage to move legislation forward this year. Diverse faith leaders – representing the breadth of support for comprehensive immigration reform in America's faith communities – joint hundreds of people of faith who have come from across the country to call for swift and meaningful immigration reform that unites families, protects workers, and treats all immigrants fairly

## TAKING ACTION SUMMER AND FALL 2009

The Episcopal Church and members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition are joining communities of faith across the country this summer to be a voice on immigration reform. Faith communities are hosting prayer vigils, planning



## National Immigration Call: JOIN US!!!

JOIN THE INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION ON THE NATIONAL FAITH AND IMMIGRATION CONFERENCE CALLS.  
THE FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 4 PM EST.  
YOU CAN JOIN PEOPLE OF FAITH THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES BY CALLING AT 800-920-7487 AND THE CODE, 76723736



## SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT

2009 National Dream Act Graduation - Event Summary  
 Tuesday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009  
 Lower Senate Park, US Capitol  
 Washington, D.C.



On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 2009 National Dream Act Mock Graduation Ceremony took place on Capitol Hill. This creative event brought delegations of young people from several states across the US to their nation's capitol to encourage their legislators to pass the Dream Act. Approximately 500 students in total participated, while dozens supported the event, and various media outlets observed.

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act is a bipartisan piece of legislation that was initially introduced in 2001. If passed, it would offer undocumented students who have been raised in the US but often face many barriers to higher education and employment a feasible way to obtain legal status and citizenship. The Dream Act would permit these long-time residents to receive permanent legal status only if they demonstrate good moral character, complete high school or earn a GED and enroll in college/university or the military, conditions which ensure that they will positively contribute to American society. This act would be relevant to the 65,000 immigrant students who graduate from high school each year yet are unable to pursue higher education ambitions because their lack of legal status.

At this unique mock graduation ceremony, several speakers gave remarks, ranging from representatives of Microsoft and the College Board corporations to undocumented students like those in the audience. Some of the most powerful words came from two high-achieving, recently college graduates whose futures were being imminently threat-

ened by their lack of legal status. The first of these speakers came to the US at the age of 8, graduated high school as valedictorian of her class, and secured a full scholarship to attend a private university. She graduated with the highest possible honors from her university, yet the



myriad possibilities in her very promising future were abruptly devastated earlier this year when she was pulled over by a police officer in her hometown for running through a stop sign. When the officer discovered her undocumented status, he handcuffed her and placed her in Immigration and Customs Enforce-

ment (ICE) detention. Now she is in the midst of deportation procedures that would permanently remove her from her friends, family, and opportunities in the United States back to the country of her birth, a place with which she has very few ties. With her pending deportation, the immediate passage of the Dream Act is utterly essential for her life.

The other recent college graduate first came to the US with her family from Nigeria at the age of 4. She, like the speaker which preceded her, excelled throughout her childhood and adolescence, seeking to put into action the lesson that she had constantly been told by her family: if one works hard and excels in school, any dream can be achieved. She became aware of her undocumented status in high school and her family has been stuck in what seem like never-ending court proceedings for the past four years. Due to the overburdened nature of immigration courts, a decision in their case does not seem possible anytime in the near future. This has put all their lives in a state of complete jeopardy, preventing her from becoming a productive member of society despite the many contributions she has to offer.

After these and other speakers imparted words of encouragement to the students, the students attended meetings with congressional staff to persuade Congress to pass the Dream Act at last. Attendees of the event witnessed these students' clear determination and hard work.

*EXTENSIVE CONSENSUS EXISTS THAT THE CURRENT IMMIGRANT SYSTEM IS BROKEN AND IS IN NEED OF REFORM. NOW, ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHETHER THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ARE ABLE TO OVERCOME POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP AND OVERHAUL THE CURRENT MAMMOTH SYSTEM, REPLACING IT WITH A MORE VLABLE AND HUMANE APPROACH.*

(Continues in page 5)

## SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT



Critics of the Dream Act may argue that current paths to obtaining citizenship already exist, or that it would encourage further migration of undocumented individuals. Yet such pathways are blocked by numerous bureaucratic hurdles and processing often takes many years. Young undocumented students' lives are literally put on hold as, without legal residency or citizenship, they are unable to access federal money for higher education, obtain professional opportunities or even simply enroll in a higher education institution in many situations. The Act could not encourage future migration because it would only apply for young people who have lived in the US for at least 5 years before the date of enactment. Therefore, if passed, this act would only apply to a set number of students

and could not provide any potential benefits for people considering future migration to the US. However, the problem which the Dream Act seeks to address could arise again in the future if comprehensive reform of the broader immigration system does not also occur. Thus, passage of the Dream Act is critical for the future of hundreds of thousands of talented young people currently in the US but cannot offer a long-term solution if it is not followed up by comprehensive reform. At a time of great economic crisis, it seems that now more than ever, the passage of the Dream Act is essential to retain talented, law-abiding youth who grew up in this country and allow them to positive contribute to American

society. Participants in this event urged Congress to consider the Dream Act as an utterly essential component of any comprehensive immigration reform, talk of which has been increasing lately. Extensive consensus exists that the current immigrant system is broken and is in need of reform. Now, only time will tell whether the President and Congress are able to overcome political partisanship and overhaul the current mammoth system, replacing it with a more viable and humane approach. Such decisions will determine the fate of many motivated, law-abiding young people and serve as a critical test of our society's adherence to the possibility of the American Dream for all.

*By Nada M. Zohdy*

### WHAT IS THE DREAM ACT?

The DREAM (The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) ACT 2009 is bipartisan legislation that would provide the opportunity to young people with good moral character, who have lived in the U.S. for at least five years and graduated from high school to legalize their status. Students qualify for a 6-year conditional permanent resident status if he or she entered the country before age 16, lived in the U.S. for at least five years before passage of the DREAM Act, and earned a high school diploma. Permanent resident status is available upon completion of two years of higher education or military service. The DREAM Act will not apply to students with criminal records or dishonorable discharges from the military. Instead of punishing students for actions taken on their behalf and beyond their control, the DREAM Act would provide a tough but fair process by which they could gain legal status.



### How can I be involved in passage of the DREAM Act?

The DREAM Act is currently being considered in both the House and the Senate. It is extremely important that your Senators and Representatives know that you support this bill. Call the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) and ask your Representatives and Senators to support the DREAM Act today!How can I be involved in pas-

## THE ALIEN AMONG YOU

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advocacy

*Working together for justice.*

CALL YOUR SENATORS  
AND REPRESENTATIVE  
AND LET THEM KNOW  
THAT YOU SUPPORT  
COMPREHENSIVE  
IMMIGRATION  
REFORM!

## Legislative and Administrative Updates



### **RECENT IMPORTANT LEGISLATION ON IMMIGRATION**

○ **May 20, 2009-** The Reuniting Families Act is introduced by Senators Menendez (D-NJ), along with Senators Gillibrand (D-NY), Kennedy (D-MA), and Schumer (D-NY) to

○ **June 15, 2009-** The Pass ID Act is introduced as an alternative to the REAL ID Act, which passed in 2005 but whose implementation was opposed by many states and which was also opposed by many civil liberties groups who argued that it would create a de facto national ID card that would easily allow invasions of privacy

○ **July 10, 2009-** The Hatch Amendment is passed, which extends for three years a visa program for non-ministry religious workers, as well as the Conrad 30 program (which allows foreign doctors who are already in the U.S. to extend their stay if they agree to practice medicine in underserved communities for 3 years)

○ **July 30, 2009-** Senators Menendez (D-NJ), Gillibrand (D-NY), and Kennedy (D-MA) introduced the Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act, [S. 1549](#),

which would create a mechanism to ensure that U.S. citizens and vulnerable populations (including asylum seekers, children, victims of torture and human trafficking, etc.) are given priority for alternatives to detention; Senators Menendez and Gillibrand also introduced S. 1550, the Safe Treatment, Avoiding Needless Deaths, and Abuse Reduction in the Detention System Act (the "Strong STANDARDS" Act) that would require better medical treatment access for immigrants in detention

○ **August 6, 2009-** Senators Lieberman (I-CT), Kennedy (D-MA) and Akaka (D-HI) introduced the Secure and Safe Detention and Asylum Act.

○ **August 7, 2009-** DHS officials announce their intention to reform the practice of detaining immigrants in order to make it humane; announcement also to close the infamous Hutto facility in which families were detained

**August 11, 2009-** Obama publicly announces that comprehensive immigration reform will have to wait until 2010.

**Good News on Detention from**

### **the Administration:**

Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced on August 6th that it will be making reforms to its detention system. The agency will be creating an Office of Detention Policy and Planning (ODPP), headed by Dora Schriro, the current Special Advisor to Secretary Napolitano on Detention and Removal Operations. With the assistance of detention and health care experts, the Office will "design and plan a civil detention system tailored to addresses ICE's needs." The Office will evaluate the current detention system, focusing on population management, detention management, programs management, health care management, alternatives to detention management, special populations management, and accountability.

Other steps being taken include the discontinuation of family detention at the T. Don Hutto Family Residential Facility in Texas, the formation of two advisory groups of local and national organizations interested in ICE's detention system, the appointment of 23 ICE detention managers to work in 23 facilities that together house more than 40 percent of detainees, and the establishment of an Office of Detention Oversight.