



PO Box 654—Lawrence, KS 66044 — (913) 232-2336

<http://ksinterfaith.nationbuilder.com>

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
mrieber@kansasinterfaithaction.org

**Written testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director of Kansas Interfaith Action,
in opposition to HB 2466, “AN ACT concerning municipalities; relating to sanctuary ordinances and
resolutions and the prohibition thereof.”**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee—

My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber, and I am Executive Director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social, economic, and environmental justice issues. I am writing today in opposition to HB 2466.

The religious community’s support of the rights and dignity of immigrants, no matter their legal status, is well-sourced, both in Scripture and in the contemporary teachings and policies of our religious traditions. In Hebrew scripture, we are directed to “love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34). Christian scripture reports that Jesus and his disciples were itinerants. When asked “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who treated a badly beaten man as the foreigner would have wished to be treated (Luke 10:25-37). The Qur’an teaches doing “good to...those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet” (4:36). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (article 13.2). Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources call us to recognize the opportunities and challenges of human migration—caring for ourselves and our families, interacting with strangers, valuing diversity, and dealing with immigration systems.¹

Most or all of the denominations included in our coalition support comprehensive immigration reform on the national level, and in its absence, prioritize upholding the legal rights and dignity of the immigrant. This includes the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the aforementioned Unitarian Universalist Association, and the United Methodist Church, which in its Book of Discipline says the following:

We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all.

¹ Unitarian Universalist Association, Immigration as a Moral Issue: 2013 Statement of Conscience.

Kansas Interfaith Action believes that directing local law enforcement to be more stringent in its enforcement of immigrant statutes is unwise for the following reasons:

- a. It is contrary to public safety. An immigrant is less likely to report criminal activity if they believe their immigration status will be questioned without cause, with the potential for disruption of home and work life implicit there.
- b. It is expensive. Forcing municipal police departments to question and, if necessary, detain undocumented immigrants will add people to the system—incarceration and court time—at a time when our localities are already dealing with stretched budgets and our courts are backed up.
- c. It breaks up families. There is no compelling social interest in breaking up hardworking, taxpaying, law-abiding families because of the immigration status of one of the members.
- d. This is yet another overreach by state government into the practices of municipalities and their police departments. Localities are far better equipped to prioritize their law enforcement practices than are state elected officials in Topeka.
- e. The Supreme Court has held that undocumented immigrant resident in our country are entitled to many Constitutional rights and protections, including the right to not be detained without probable cause.

Therefore, based on the words of Scripture; the contemporary teachings and policies of our denominations; the practical impact of the proposed legislation on local enforcement, on the cohesion of immigrant families, and on the dignity of the immigrant, we oppose HB 2466 and urge the committee to defeat it.

Thank you for your attention.