



MCIRR Steering Committee  
3030 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 1B  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

April 8, 2019

Chairman Beau LaFave  
Members of the Committee  
House Committee on Military, Veterans and Homeland Security  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Re: Opposition to Sanctuary Policy Prohibition Acts (HB 4083 & HB 4090)

Dear Members of the House Committee on Military, Veterans and Homeland Security:

The Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (MCIRR) was founded in 1987 and is a membership organization of approximately seventy nonprofit groups that serve immigrants and refugees statewide. MCIRR's mission is to coordinate educational and organizational efforts that build capacity within Michigan's immigrant advocacy community, support immigrants' rights in federal, state, and local policy, and promote a more positive and inclusive atmosphere for immigrants and refugees in Michigan.

We are writing to express our opposition to HB 4083 and HB 4090 for two reasons. First, these bills will facilitate discrimination on the basis of race. Race is an immutable characteristic bearing no necessary relationship to immigration status. Yet, race has been made the basis for unjustified assumptions concerning a person's legal status in this country. These assumptions create incentives for to engage in racial profiling activities that target individuals regardless of whether they are U.S. citizens, lawfully present, or undocumented. This consequence should concern our state because of Michigan's vibrant Latino/a, Arab American, and Asian American communities who frequently relate a common experience of being perceived as perpetually foreign regardless of immigration status or multigenerational history in the U.S.

We don't need to look any further than just a few months ago to see the inevitable result of this racial profiling. In December of last year, Jilmar Ramos-Gomez, a U.S. citizen and Marine who served as a lance corporal and tank crewman in Afghanistan, was reported to ICE. That federal agency had pressured our very own Kent County to send anyone they suspected might look like they were not a U.S. citizen to them. Jilmar looks Latino. Thus, the county was compelled to send this U.S. citizen to ICE solely on the basis of his allegedly foreign appearance for ICE's purposes. ICE did not even release Jilmar until days later after he had secured an attorney. This avoidable incident is an embarrassment to our state and a moral failure to our richly diverse communities.

Second, these bills undermine public trust and make communities less safe. Victims and witnesses of crime will be unwilling to cooperate with local and state police if they perceive that law enforcement agents are not there to protect their rights, but are instead a proxy deportation agency engaged in profiling. Indeed, multiple systematic studies using the FBI's own crime statistics have revealed that communities that choose to adopt sanctuary practices have less crime overall than communities that are anti-sanctuary. Ricardo D. Martínez-Schuldt & Daniel E. Martínez, *Sanctuary Policies and City-Level Incidents of Violence*, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (December 18, 2017). For this reason, HB 4083 HB 4090 will likely have the

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MCIRR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1989. Learn more at [www.MCIRR.org](http://www.MCIRR.org)



unfortunate result of increasing crime throughout our state and reducing law enforcement's ability to solve and prevent crimes.

Please consider the effect these bills would have on local communities with immigrant residents and residents who may be perceived as foreign. Thank you for your leadership, service, and commitment to the public interest.

Sincerely,



Rebeca Ontiveros-Chavez, Esq.  
Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights





## Member Organizations of the Michigan Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (MCIRR)\*

These groups are recognized as non-profit, religious, educational, or charitable organizations under the Internal Revenue Code that affirm the purpose and work of MCIRR. Eligible organizations may become members and individuals may become supporters!

### JOIN MCIRR

The 313 Project  
 Accounting Aid Society  
 African Bureau for Immigration & Social Affairs (ABISA)  
 Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)  
 Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership  
 American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan  
 Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote Michigan (APIA-Vote Michigan)  
 Arbor Circle Group  
 Blue Water Safe Horizons  
 Casa Latina- Ann Arbor  
 Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan  
 Catholic Diocese of Gaylord – Secretariat for Peace and Justice  
 Catholic Services of Macomb – Immigration and Refugee Services Lapeer  
 CODE Legal Aid, Inc.  
 Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation  
 Diocese of Grand Rapids Immigration Legal Services  
 Diocese of Kalamazoo Immigration Assistance Program  
 Dominican Sisters - Grand Rapids  
 Farmworker Legal Services  
 Freedom House  
 Garden of Dreams Preschool  
 Garfield Park Neighborhood Association  
 Hamtramck School Based Health Center  
 Hispanic Center of Western Michigan  
 Immigrant Connection at City Life Church  
 International Affairs Center  
 International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit



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Latin Americans United for Progress  
 Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development  
 Lakeshore Legal Aid, La Vida  
 Legal Aid & Defender Association, Inc.  
 Lemkin House, Inc.  
 Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates  
 SafeHouse Center  
 Samaritas (formerly Lutheran Social Services of Michigan)  
 Macomb International Service Center  
 Mercy Health - Saint Mary's Clinic Santa Maria  
 Mexican American Council, Inc.  
 Migrant Legal Aid  
 Michigan Immigrant Rights Center  
 Michigan League for Public Policy  
 Michigan State University College of Law Immigration Law Clinic  
 Michigan UU Social Justice Network  
 Noor's Heaven of West Michigan Services  
 Oceana Hispanic Center  
 Office of Social Justice (Christian Reform Church)  
 Piast Institute  
 Senior Neighbors  
 Sisters Home Visitors of Mary  
 Sisters of Mercy  
 Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center  
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities Immigration Law Clinic  
 Telamon Corporation  
 The Immigrant Connection at City Life Church  
 Thomas M. Cooley Law School Immigrant Rights and Civil Advocacy Clinic  
 Thrive: A Refugee Support Program  
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing  
 University of Detroit Mercy - Immigration Law Clinic  
 United Hispanic Workers of Detroit  
 Voces Battle Creek  
 Washtenaw Health Plan  
 Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
 Wayne State University Law School Asylum and Immigrant Law Clinic  
 Workers' Center of West Michigan (Micah Center)  
 Yoruba American Community  
 YWCA Kalamazoo

\*List current as of July 2, 2018

