

Hispanic Church Leaders Approve Proposed Immigration Reform Bill

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference—the nation’s largest Christian Hispanic organization—the Hispanic Evangelical Association and NHCLC President, Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, applaud the proposed Senate bill on immigration reform.

Rodriguez will join Sen. Marco Rubio and the bipartisan Senate “Gang of Eight” in a press conference in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, as they outline their proposed **immigration reform bill**. The Senate introduced legislation, which serves to solve the immigration reform process, at 2 a.m. this morning.

“Engaging a biblical narrative as a metaphor, the immigration cause no longer resides in the Egypt of political apathy or the desert of inevitable deportation,” Rodriguez said Thursday. “Today, this just cause stands before the ‘Jordan’ called reform. With prophetic courage, spiritual fortitude and political will, we will cross into the promise land of integration thus protecting our values, borders and dream.

“Ironically the same issue that once polarized our nation now serves as a conduit for bipartisan collaboration. Now is the time.”

On Thursday, the same day that the Senate introduced immigration reform legislation, hundreds of evangelical congregants and leaders from over 24 states descended upon Washington, D.C. for the first-ever national “Evangelical Day of Prayer and Action on Immigration Reform.”

Carlos Moran, NHCLC board member and NHCLC immigration spokesperson, is one of several leaders speaking at this event

in D.C, many of whom believe the United States is on the verge of a major and much anticipated breakthrough on immigration reform.

"As evangelicals, as born-again believers, as the spiritual heirs to the mantles of Billy Graham and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we affirm our conviction that it is the time to reconcile border security with security of our values; values that include faith, hope and charity."Values that prompt us to worship our Lord and welcome the stranger," Moran explained.

"For at the end of the day, passing immigration reform is not, as Rev. Samuel Rodriguez reminds us, about advancing the agenda of the donkey or the elephant. Immigration reform is about living out the agenda of the lamb."

The Rev. Wilfredo "Choco" De Jesús, profiled along with Rodriguez's description of the Latino Reformation in the April 15 *Time magazine* feature story, is pastor of New Life Covenant Church, NHCLC vice president and NHCLC Illinois Chapter director.

"Comprehensive immigration reform is long overdue," he said. "As long as a pathway to citizenship remains at the heart of this bill I remain hopeful that undocumented families will be offered the opportunity to stay together and not be torn apart by our current broken immigration system. These families are woven into the fabric of our daily lives—their children attend school with our children, they worship and are active in our churches, they are contributing members of our society.

"As a pastor and NHCLC vice president of Social Justice, I will continue to advocate and stand for the millions of undocumented families that deserve a pathway to citizenship as the word of God instructs me to do," De Jesús concluded.