

Maryland Ecumenical Office for Public Policy

**Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Metropolitan Washington DC Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
United Church of Christ, Central Atlantic Conference**

Testimony Prepared for the
Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
House Joint Resolution 10
Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws
March 21, 2011
Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Ecumenical Office for Public Policy (MEOPP) speaks with a common voice for the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, the Delaware-Maryland Synod (ELCA), the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod (ELCA), and the United Church of Christ, Central Atlantic Conference. It covers 387 congregations in Maryland.

MEOPP opposes HJ 10. This resolution would require Maryland to enforce federal immigration laws and calls on State and local law enforcement officers to arrest any person guilty of hiring, harboring, or transporting illegal immigrants. No federal law mandates State or local police enforce immigration law. This resolution fails to properly train law enforcement in this complex issue, will undermine community policing, and will place churches and good Samaritans at risk.

This resolution does not propose to train police officers on issues of immigration law and enforcement. It gives State and local law enforcement authority to detain and arrest people for perceived immigration violation without the benefit of proper training. It will lead to racial profiling and could lead to the prolonged detention of citizens and legal residents.

Enforcement of this resolution would lead to immigrants fearing and distrusting the police, making them reluctant to report crimes. As a consequence, it destroys the concept of community policing.

Further, it raises concerns for those acting out of humanitarian and religious motivations. The resolution is unclear whether a person offering a ride or shelter to another person out of humanitarian or religious concern rather than with the intent to further the violation of immigration law would be subject to arrest.

We respectfully urge an unfavorable report on HJ 10.

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Advocate