

MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD AT CANDIDATE EVENTS

In preparation for the November elections, candidates are campaigning in locations near you! Many campaign stops are open to the public and are a chance for members to hear directly from their constituents about the key issues before Congress. This election season, the humanitarian crisis at the southern border and unaccompanied immigrant children are likely to be a frequently discussed topic, as is immigration reform. Anti-immigrant groups will be present to make their case and confuse the two issues. We need to make sure that our elected officials hear LOUD and CLEAR that we, as Catholics, want to see a response to these children driven by compassion, justice and humanity. By asking questions about the treatment of children, conditions in Central America, or the detention of families we communicate with our elected officials about the values we share as a community, and the role we have to play as people of faith.

Follow these easy steps to get involved:

1. Call your Representative to ask when and where public campaign events will be held.
2. Invite other community members who care about unaccompanied children and the current crisis in Central America to attend with you. Make signs, wear t-shirts, and find creative ways to visually display that you are a person of faith who supports immigration reform.
3. Get there early and sit near microphones. Don't all sit together — it will help show that there is not just one group that supports immigration reform, but many from all over the community.
4. Prepare your question(s) ahead of time and write them down, in case they only take written questions. Have one or two key facts at your fingertips and include them when you ask your questions, along with a story about why you care or of someone who is impacted in your community. It can be tempting to want to cover every aspect of immigration reform or try and rebut other questions or comments that have been raised, but keep the message clear, concise and consistent. You can always follow-up with the office after the event.
5. Raise your hand to ask a question and keep your hand up until they give you time to speak. Find a way to be heard by cheering for others' questions, making a lot of noise in order for them to give you time to speak, and talking with the representative or their staff afterwards, and reemphasizing your point.

If you would like additional background materials, information on your representative's stance, or assistance formulating questions, please contact saber@jesuits.org.