

For Immediate Release:

Jewish Leaders, Community Members Call on Senator Feinstein to Support Family Reunification in Immigration Policy

Jewish Community Sends Clear Message to Senator Dianne Feinstein:

HOME IS WHERE YOUR FAMILY IS, WE MUST KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

Monday, June 17, 2013, 1 Post Plaza, San Francisco, CA - Community members and leadership from both Northern and Southern California gathered today in front of Senator Dianne Feinstein's office with a very clear message: **The United States needs an immigration policy that reaffirms and protects family reunification and preserves the family unit in all its myriad of forms.**

Community leaders from across the state called on Congress to recall that the American was created thanks to generous immigration policies, and community members shared their personal family immigration stories. Rabbi Heather Miller, representing Los Angeles-based congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim, the world's first LGBTQ synagogue, said that for many "America is the Promised Land."

But for many, this Promised Land has become more dream than reality as families struggle to stay together due to a broken immigration system.

"We need an [immigration] policy that helps strengthen American communities – not tear them apart. Home truly is where your family is, and our American family must remain diverse, inclusive and welcoming," said Jessica Trubowitch, Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) Director of Legislative Affairs and Intergroup Relations.

Rabbi Jonathan Klein, representing Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles (CLUE-LA), called on the group to remember a time when Congress "recognized a system that does not commoditize immigrants but rather recognizes the holistic value of the family unit...People are not units of profit, but individuals created in God's image."

JCRC Council Member Terry Fletcher showed pictures of her family members that immigrated to the United States. She talked about her grandparents, who waited three years from 1938 until 1941 until they were finally able to leave Germany. During that time they were forced to pick up rubble from the streets of Berlin with their bare hands. Ms. Fletcher spoke of the incredible contribution her family has made to the United States. Her mother, Ellen Fletcher, an immigrant and Holocaust survivor, was at the forefront of bicycle rights activism. The first ever bicycle boulevard, located in Palo Alto was created largely thanks to Ellen Fletcher's efforts, was created in her name.

Sophia Lanza-Weil, representing Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice called for a policy in which immigrants are "not made to choose between love of their home and love of their family."

The Jewish community made their voice heard loud and clear: Home is where your family is, and we must have an immigration policy that keeps families together.

Following the rally, a small contingent spoke directly with the Deputy State Director, Sean Elsbernd, about the Jewish community's vision for comprehensive immigration reform and family reunification.

For more information about the Jewish community's efforts to promote just immigration reform contact:

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This event was a coordinated effort with several Jewish and Interfaith organizations: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE-LA); Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (ICIR); Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice; The San Francisco-based Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC); The American Jewish Committee (AJC); and PICO National Network.

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