

Minute on Haitian Crisis

Yellow Springs Friends Meeting, Yellow Springs, Ohio

A Call to End Immigration Detention and Deportation Policies in Springfield, Ohio

“There is that of God in everyone.” For the Yellow Springs Friends Meeting, this testimony is the root of our belief in the dignity and value of each person as well as our desire to reach out to vulnerable people, our neighbors, with love and respect. We strongly oppose the brutal practices and violent procedures being utilized by our government to detain and deport our Haitian neighbors in Springfield, Ohio, and other cities in our nation.

We stand with and support the network of non-profits and faith communities in Springfield, and their work to protect families and individuals who have made Springfield their home. These networks follow the Gospel of Matthew, 25:40, citing the call from Jesus: “What you did for the least of my brethren, you did it for me.” With them, we collect food, offer help with legal problems, protect children, find housing and do our best to act on the call to “Love Thy Neighbor,” a call from all faith traditions.

We strongly oppose the fear campaigns being carried out by ICE: the separating of families, the invasive and violent takeover of communities by these paramilitary troops, and the cruel tactic of forcing criminal status with shame-inducing ankle monitors, even on immigrants with legal standing. This shackling of Haitian immigrants, many of whom have lived decades in Springfield, creates sad echoes of our racist past with slavery. The ending of Temporary Protection Status causes great harm in our communities.

We also oppose the expansion of detention centers. These modern-day concentration camps are being run for profit, and they withhold medical care and other humane services for both adults and children. We are ashamed of our country’s creation of these concentration camps and the carrying out of policies that actively harm our communities.

We have learned by our close physical distance to Springfield (10 miles away) that all Americans now live on the border. We are all vulnerable to the lawless and cruel immigration policies and programs created by the current administration. We stand with people of conscience around the country who are refusing to agree to these policies. We honor those who have been killed, both those protesting policies and those who have died in detention camps from hunger or lack of needed medical care.

We feel deep grief that we live in a country now known for its cruelty and lack of justice for immigrants. This is our public witness — speaking out with God’s love for the rights, safety and dignity of our Haitian immigrant neighbors.