

1 DATE SUBMITTED: February 24, 2014

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3 SUBMITTED BY: Immigration Team – contact information, Chair, Susan George,
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6 SUMMARY OF INTENT: This resolution declares the Minnesota Conference United Church of
7 Christ to be in support of a campaign to end an appropriations quota requiring the Department of
8 Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to maintain a daily
9 immigrant detention level of 34,000 individuals regardless of need. It further requires that
10 members of the Conference staff take actions to educate, organize and advocate for ending this
11 policy.

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13 Background and Supporting Statement: The UCC has identified over 50 verses in the Bible that
14 have to do with welcoming and befriending the stranger among us, and as in Leviticus 19:34 we
15 are commanded to “love the stranger as yourself.” And Romans 13:10 reminds us that “Love does
16 no wrong to our neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

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18 WHEREAS the Thirteenth General Synod (1981) of the United Church of Christ passed the *Justice*
19 *In Immigration* Pronouncement which speaks both to all entities and congregations in the United
20 Church of Christ and “also carries the force of establishing program priorities for General Synod
21 related entities” (Clyde Steckel, quoted in note, January 16, 2014); and

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23 WHEREAS the *Pronouncement* says that “supports continued protection of basic human rights
24 and freedom of movement for all immigrants, migrants, and refugees tempered only by minimum
25 necessary limitations” (section B2); and, it “affirms the obligation of governments to provide
26 justice for all persons under their jurisdiction” (D2) and that “the Congress should specifically
27 grant refugees and immigrants the same basic procedural and substantive rights which the
28 Constitution guarantees to citizens” (D2a); and it declares “local churches, conferences and
29 instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to advocate for the rights of immigrants” (F2a);

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31 WHEREAS General Synod 29 (2013) passed a “Resolution Supporting Compassionate
32 Comprehensive Immigration Reform And The Protection Of The Human Rights Of Immigrants”
33 (<http://uccfiles.com/pdf/gs29-14.pdf>), and that that resolution calls for placement of
34 humanitarian values at the center of enforcement policies” (lines 54 & 55);

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36 Whereas it can be reasonably inferred from the aggregate witness of the cited United Church of
37 Christ pronouncements and resolutions that the bed quota or detention quota system violates the
38 norms and values to which the United Church of Christ gives witness;

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40 WHEREAS Congress has mandated through appropriations that the Department of Homeland
41 Security (DHS) maintains a daily immigration detention level of 34,000 individuals, a micro
42 managing approach that **does not exist in any other law enforcement context**; prevents DHS
43 from making decisions about immigrant detention based on its enforcement priorities, policies,
44 needs, resources, and humanitarian concerns; and costs taxpayers about \$2 billion each year;

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46 WHEREAS alternatives to detention have received bipartisan support for their cost-savings from
47 groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations’ Independent Task Force on U.S. Immigration
48 Policy, the Heritage Foundation, the Pretrial Justice Institute, the Texas Public Policy Foundation
49 (home to Right on Crime), the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National
50 Conference of Chief Justices;

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52 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the
53 United Church of Christ declares its opposition to the bed quota as a violation of core Christian,
54 Biblical, and Human Rights norms and values;

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56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the delegates of the 2014 Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting
57 convey this resolution to the congregations they represent urging congregational members to
58 contact their Minnesota Congressional delegate, encouraging them to remove the bed quota
59 mandate from the DHA appropriations bill;

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61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the
62 United Church of Christ urges all members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation to support
63 Congressional action to end the immigration bed quota and with it the arbitrary use of
64 immigration detention, thus saving and making more efficient use of critical taxpayer dollars as
65 well as providing for more humane treatment of immigrants working to resolve their status
66 issues;

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68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the
69 United Church of Christ directs the Conference Minister, in collaboration with the Immigration
70 Team, to prepare and send a letter in support of this resolution on Minnesota Conference UCC
71 letterhead that is signed by the Conference Minister and Associate Conference Ministers to all
72 members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation;

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74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that within one month of the passage of this resolution the
75 Immigration Team will begin to schedule meetings with each member of the Minnesota
76 Congressional delegation. Along with members of the Immigration Team, these meetings will
77 include at least one person from among the Conference Minister and the Associate Conference
78 Ministers. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss and advocate to end the bed quota, be
79 updated per the status of the effort in Congress, and also to advocate for and discuss the status of
80 immigration reform legislation, the Congressperson's position, etc.;

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82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the
83 United Church of Christ directs the Conference Minister in collaboration with the Immigration
84 Team to craft a version of this resolution to present to the Board of the Minnesota Council of
85 Churches for their endorsement and action.