PRAYERS FOR IMMIGRANTS

Religious groups seek ‘compassion’
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Inside a government building in Broadview, Ele-
nora Segura was focused on comforting and counsel-
ing people. Within the hour, their loved ones — illegal im-
migrants — were going to be shackled and deported.

Outside, dozens of religious leaders and congre-
gants from various faiths called on a higher power for
change.

From Evangelicals making $250,000 ad buys, to
praying protesters outside U.S. deportation facilities,
to Muslim leaders and other interfaith groups holding
news conferences calling out politicians, religious leaders
and their flock have been vocal and active in pushing for
compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform.

Some represent religious institutions with significant
numbers of members who are undocumented or have
family or friends who are, but others have few if any such
congregants. The need for reform is a religious, moral and
family issue, the leaders say.

“I think in any biblically based religion whether its Ju-
daism or Christianity, you’ll see over and over again com-
mandments that we treat the immigrant with compassion,
that we have one law for all who dwell in the land wheth-
er they are citizens or strang-
ers,” said Rabbi Brant Rosen
of Jewish Reconstructionist
Congregation in Evanston,
where buses (below) arrived to pick up undocumented im-
migrants for immediate deportation.

Leaders also contend re-
formers must look at why
people risk their lives to
come here. That includes ad-
dressing global poverty and
unemployment, says Segura,
director of the Archdiocese
of Chicago’s Office for Immi-
grant Affairs and Immigrant
Education.

Last month, Catholic pa-
rishioners turned in more
than 150 parishes in the Chi-
cago, comprised of leaders
from more than three dozen
religious groups from Baptists
to Sikhs, also advocates creat-
ing minimum-wage provisions
for all workers, the document-
ing of immigrant employment
and compensation and calls for
not criminalizing immigrants
or those who provide humaniti-
tarian aid to them.

Leaders of Metropolitan Chi-
cago, comprised of leaders
time, [reform] should be
done in a manner that re-
spects the family unit.”

Ahmed Rehab, executive
director of the Council on
American-Islamic Relations-
Chicago, has given more
than 100 speeches on the is-
 sue in the past few years.

“Families are broken; in-
dividuals are devastated,” he
said. “They’re just hu-
man beings trying to make
it. They’re arrested and de-
ported without any account
for who they leave behind or
how their lives are affected.

“Social justice is a core be-
ief in the Islamic faith, espe-
cially for those in a position
of weakness. We’re encour-
gaged to stand by them.”

Sister Carol Cook was among those praying for compassionate immigration reform on Fri-
day. | FRANCINE KNOWLES—SUNTIMES PHOTOS

17,000 members in the Chi-
cago area, will travel to Wash-
ington, D.C., next month to ad-
vocate for reform. He will join
pastors who are members of
the Evangelical Immigration
Table, a group founded by
heads of evangelical organiza-
tions that range from the con-
servative to the liberal. The
group earlier this month ran
a radio and billboard ad cam-
paign in key states calling for

Religious leaders and congregants (above) gathered to pray
and advocate for compassionate immigration reform Friday
morning outside the U.S. Detention Center in Broadview,
where buses (below) arrived to pick up undocumented im-
migrants for immediate deportation.

‘compassion’

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