



For Immediate Release

September 30, 2015

CONTACT: Trineka Greer, PICO California
(916) 813-9428, trineka@picocalifornia.org



Day 5 of #Journey4Justice Vigil at Governor Brown's Office to Urge Him to Sign AB 953 (Racial Profiling)

Participants announce Hunger Strike to begin in Monday if Governor still has not signed the bill

What: The **#Journey4Justice vigil** moves into its fifth day of having a 24 hour presence at Governor Jerry Brown's office to urge him to sign AB953 (Weber: The Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015). After delivering nearly 2,000 prayer cards signed by supporters from all over the state, participants have held a constant vigil at the Governor's office overnight and even during the rain. Activities for Thursday, October 1 will include clergy from Sacramento and Oakland hosting a **"Pray In, Preach In and Act Out"** program. During this time, clergy will also announce details of our **Hunger Strike** and nationwide **Solidarity Fasts** to begin on Monday, October 5.

Who: Families and individuals impacted by racial profiling, clergy and other faith leaders including Rev. Ben McBride, Director of Clergy Development –PICO California. **Rev. McBride led the October 2nd shut down of Governor Brown's office**. Other community members and youth will be present. Joe Kocurek, Director, Communications for Assemblymember Weber will speak during the program. Invitations have been extended to Governor Brown's office as well as local and state elected officials.

When: The #Journey4Justice will continue 24-hours a day through October 11th or until Governor Brown signs AB 953. Led by clergy, tomorrow's **"Pray In, Preach In and Act Out"** program will take place from 10am to 2p. **Testimonies from clergy, Assemblymember Weber's office, impacted families, and details about our hunger strike and solidarity fasting will take place between 12N and 12:45pm.**

Why: AB 953 was approved by state legislators and sent to Governor Brown's desk on September 10, 2015. According to the Communities United Coalition, which is comprised of six AB 953 cosponsor organizations, this historic legislation would make the first meaningful steps to identify how pervasive racial profiling is across our state, an epidemic that has led to police brutality and has traumatized communities of color for generations.

Although limited, the data collected in California tells an alarming story about what people of color have always known: **if you are Black, Black, or Indigenous, the police are far more likely to stop you simply because of the color of your skin.** Police stop Blacks and Latinos at three and two times the rate of whites, respectively according to a report from San Diego Police Department. According to an

independent analysis, unarmed black men are seven times more likely than unarmed white men to die by police gunfire. The impacts of biased policing on women, members of the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and religious minorities are similarly frightening.

Having not been granted an audience with Governor Brown and unsure of his desire to sign AB 953, #Journey4Justice participants have made a commitment to remain at the State Capitol engaged in a variety of activities until Governor Brown signs AB 953 into law. Racial profiling is an urgent issue and #Journey4Justice participants believe communities of color should not have to wait until the next legislative session to make progress.

If signed by Governor Brown, AB 953 would:

- Update California's definition of racial and identity profiling to be in line with federal recommendations by including other demographic characteristics, such as gender and sexual orientation.
- Require that California law enforcement agencies uniformly collect and report data on stops, frisks, and other interactions with the communities they serve.
- Establish an advisory board to analyze stop data and develop recommendations to address problems with disparate policing where they exist.

Visuals: Clergy in full vestment, participants in branded t-shirts holding banners, and spiritual/religious customs observed.

For up-to-date coverage, follow <http://bit.ly/Journey4Justice>.

To view #Journey4Justice images, visit <http://bit.ly/Journey4JusticePics>

An open letter about AB 953 from prominent California clergy to Governor Brown can be viewed on the Daily Kos: <http://bit.ly/AB953OpenClergyLtr>.

###

The Communities United Coalition is comprised of the six AB 953 cosponsor organizations: PICO California, ACLU of California, Youth Justice Coalition, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Reform California, and Dignity and Power Now, as well as other organizations that also support the bill.

PICO California is the state's largest community organizing network. We organize in 73 cities, 15 school districts, and in more than one-half of the state's Senate and Assembly districts. PICO California was established in 1994, bringing together local federations from throughout California to affect meaningful budget and policy change at the state level. Over the past 20 years, our organizing and policy advocacy has resulted in increased investments in education and healthcare, and in programs and services that are critical for working families. Together, we represent 480 congregations and 450,000 families of diverse economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds committed to advancing racial and economic justice in California through organizing, advocacy, and voter engagement. Visit www.PICOCalifornia.org to learn more.

PICO California and its federations are non-partisan and do not endorse or support candidates for office.