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California Faith Leaders to President Trump: Executive Orders that Profile Muslims, Persons Fleeing Violence, Target Undocumented Immigrants, and Retaliate Against Sanctuary Cities are Immoral

Berkeley, California – PICO California, the largest network of congregations and faith-based groups in the state, believes President Trump’s executive orders that profile Muslims, other persons fleeing violence, target undocumented immigrants, and retaliate against sanctuary cities are abhorrent and vow to resist these orders as well as stand in solidarity with and protect our beloved communities by any means necessary. The multi-faith, multiracial network vowed to stand in solidarity with all persons impacted by the administration’s discriminatory and life threatening orders, and to work with local and state leaders to create laws and policies that protect all vulnerable people.

“Our faith practices implore us to resist the laws of man when they are in stark contradiction to the laws of God,” said **Joseph McKellar, Co-Director of PICO California**. “We believe that Trump’s orders are a charge against humanity and dignity of our families, friends, and neighbors and we know that when one of us is unsafe, then the entire community, regardless of immigration status or religion, is also rendered less safe.”

“Retaliating against local communities because they refuse to follow immoral policies is part of an emerging pattern of President Trump not only bullying people who dare to disagree with him, but isolating and further marginalizing people who are different than him,” said **Eddie Carmona, campaign director for PICO National Network’s LA RED campaign**. “Such behavior is inconsistent with the long-held notion that America is a place of opportunity for all.”

The move to retaliate against cities that offer safe havens for undocumented communities is part of a broader trend that sees communities of color disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and funneled into a deportation system that lacks basic due process protections. Immigrant communities of color face a double whammy of being targeted based on race and immigration status.

The executive order targeting Muslims was foreshadowed on the campaign trail when President Trump and his surrogates regularly discharged hateful Islamophobia. They made it clear that this administration would prevent Muslims from entering the country and increase profiling of religious minorities. It would be cause enough for concern if this approach originated solely from President Trump, but his inner circle includes people such as chief strategist Steve Bannon and attorney general nominee Jeff Sessions, who will have a vote on his confirmation on January 31, who have gone on the record disparaging Islam.

“Over the past year, we have been organizing our racial, economic, and social justice efforts under the battle cry of ‘one people with one fight’ because we ardently believe that the liberation of all people hinges upon the liberation of the most vulnerable,” said **Reverend Ben McBride, Co-Director of PICO California**. “Via Trump’s executive orders, gag orders on federal agencies, and statements via the media, it is clear that he is waging war



on communities of color who will disproportionately impacted. We are ready to resist any aspect of his agenda, which lacks compassion and devalues our brothers and sisters.”

Last week’s executive orders are the first steps in an amplified attack on immigrants and Muslims. Rather than funding enforcement and focusing on tracking, detaining and deporting vulnerable communities, the administration should invest in policies that uphold our values and provide true security for local communities. As a faith organization, our clergy and leaders are compelled to oppose unjust, misogynistic and racist policies that are designed to separate families. We will continue challenge, at every turn, any policy by the Trump administration that is contrary to our faith and values. Faith communities across the state are creating hundreds of rapid response teams, sanctuary congregations, and training for community leaders on their constitutional rights.

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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.

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