

Angels Unaware

Allison Duvall 00:10

Why do you support refugees?

00:12

I support refugees because my family were refugees.

00:15

I support refugees because we are all God's children and we all deserve a safe place to grow in God's love.

00:21

I support refugees because God made us all in God's image.

00:25

I support refugees because I'm a legal guardian of a minor asylum named Carol from Burundi.

00:32

I support refugees because my Lord was a refugee.

00:36

Because I welcome and I love my neighbor.

Allison Duvall 00:40

Hi, and welcome to Hometown, a podcast from Episcopal Migration Ministries. I'm Allison Duvall.

Kendall Martin 00:46

And I'm Kendall Martin and we're coming to you today with an in between seasons episode.

Allison Duvall 00:51

Today's episode is a recording from a recent webinar we hosted called Angels Unaware: A Migration Policy Update.

Kendall Martin 00:58

This update comes from policy advisor Rushad Thomas from the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations. Rushad provides an overview of the migration policy landscape on Capitol Hill.

Allison Duvall 01:08

That's right. This webinar covers everything from DACA and public charge, to refugees and family separation, all with a focus on connecting the Church's public policy positions back to our baptismal promise to proclaim the good news of God in Christ, to seek and serve Christ and all persons, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

Kendall Martin 01:27

Thank you for joining us.

Rushad Thomas 01:33

Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today for this webinar. We're very happy to have you all here. And I'm Rushad Thomas. I am the Migration Policy Advisor for the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations. And it's my job to advocate here in Washington for lawmakers before the administration on Episcopal Church's positions on all of the wide array of migration policy issues. And I'd like to introduce my colleagues, Allison and Kendall as well.

Kendall Martin 02:07

Thank you. Rushad. I'm Kendall Martin, and I'm the Communications Manager for Episcopal Migration Ministries.

Allison Duvall 02:13

And I'm Allison Duvall. I am Episcopal Migration Ministries' Manager for Church Relations and Engagement. Very glad to be with you today.

Rushad Thomas 02:22

So let's get started. First of all, in prayer, this beautiful prayer from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, I'd like for us to say now, we as we begin all things in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, amen. Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst. Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt. But you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd welcoming them as brothers and sisters. Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds. Lord Jesus, help us by your grace, to banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of each of your children, as our own brother and sister, to welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs. To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain, to learn the ways of peace and justice, to share in our abundance as you spread a banquet before us, to give witness to your love for all people. As we celebrate the many gifts they bring. We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the Divine unity of the one most Holy Trinity, in whom we make our prayer, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rushad Thomas 04:10

Alrighty, so let's get started. First, I'd like to go over the agenda for our presentation today. We're going to start by looking at the Trump administration's take why reducing immigration is such a major part of this administration's agenda. And then the bulk of the presentation will discuss how the administration is implementing its so called America First agenda, looking at issues ranging from immigrant detention to the public charge rule to deportation relief programs. And then we're going to talk about what you can do in response with messaging and advocacy and then we'll have time at the end for q and a.

Rushad Thomas 04:51

Alright, so the Trump administration has an overall view of immigration that is essentially this: it's bad. And their approach is that we have too much illegal immigration and too much legal immigration. So first we'll talk about their views of illegal immigration. So the administration argues that there are 11 million undocumented people in our country and their presence flouts the rule of law. And our response is that of course, I mean, it's unfortunate that there are so many human beings present in our country without authorization. But nonetheless, they form an indispensable part of our local and national communities. They pay taxes, they have US citizen children, they take jobs that Americans don't want to want to take, and they're a vital part of all of our lives as Americans. The administration also argues that undocumented immigrants undercut domestic labor. That is not true. Undocumented immigrants actually complement the labor of other workers, the economy, the job market is not a fixed thing. So whenever you have more people, a part of the economy, whether they're documented or documented, that's people, as I mentioned earlier, paying taxes.

Rushad Thomas 05:59

Now when it comes to legal immigration, the administration is also strongly opposed to the levels of legal immigration that we have in our country as well. The administration argues that the US foreign-born population has reached a record 44 million in 2017. And we admit more than a million legal immigrants to the United States each year, larger than any other country in the world, which is true, but that's actually lower than our peak foreign-born population 100 years ago. It's also lower as a proportion of the population than many of our ally countries like Canada and Australia. Canada has 35 million people versus the United States' 327 million people. And 20% of the Canadian population is foreign-born, where it's just 13% of the US population is. Where Australia has 25 million people or 24 million people, a quarter of Australia's population is foreign-born. Whereas again, as I said, only 13% of the US population is foreign-born so that argument doesn't really hold much water either. And then they also the administration also argues that the majority of legal immigrants arrive via family reunification visas, whereas the administration to district describes it yet chain migration quote, unquote, and that that doesn't serve the interests of the United States. And our response to that is, of course, reuniting families serves the interests of the United States. Families belong together. Could you imagine if you had a spouse or a sibling or your parents overseas, and you wanted them to be with you, and you couldn't have them with you? That would that would have negative impacts on your life. So of course, family reunification serves the country's interests because it makes our community stronger when people have their families with them.

Rushad Thomas 07:38

And then the administration also argues that immigration radically changes the nature of the country. And on point, we are in complete agreement. And that's a wonderful thing. Because every new generation of immigrants brings unique gifts and talents to the American family, and we celebrate and rejoice in those contributions they bring. You know, can you imagine in America without Irish pubs and Italian pizza and pierogies, and you know taco trucks on every corner that would it would be a poor country without the the contributions that each new wave of immigrants brings to our American family. So that's the reasoning the administration uses to justify its anti-immigration policies.

Rushad Thomas 08:17

So now we're going to discuss some of the policies themselves, how the administration is implementing America First. So the first thing we're going to talk about is immigrant detention. So what is immigrant detention? Immigrant detention is essentially just the practice of holding individuals in government custody for violations of our immigration laws, such as illegal entry or visa overstays during the removal proceedings. And US Immigration and Customs Enforcement reported 51,302 adults in detention as of the week of September 21, 2019, the most recent numbers I can find. So how did we get here? We have a long history of immigrant detention going back to the Reagan administration. So this is not a new thing in our country's history. Of course, the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations detained immigrants as well. But there's a major difference between what any president in the last 40 years has done versus what President Trump has done. The Trump administration's approach has been significantly harsher than anything we've seen in the 40 plus year history of immigrant detention. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General in May 2019 and July 2019 found that migrants were detained under conditions failing federal standards, featuring prolonged detention, overcrowding, poor hygiene and food standards. And additionally, some American citizens have even been detained wrongfully, which is completely unacceptable.

Rushad Thomas 09:37

So I'm sure many of you are interested in knowing more about the situation of family separation. Family separation stems from the administration's quote unquote zero tolerance policy aimed at deterring attempted undocumented immigration. The administration's policy basically was to separate undocumented family units, fathers, mothers, and children, who had crossed the border by prosecuting parents under federal criminal law which would place them in federal jails, and that would then necessitate their separation from their children. The children were treated as unaccompanied minors, which meant that they were to be handed over to the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the US Department of Health and Human Services. And that office is tasked with providing foster care services to legitimately unaccompanied minors, which is another population that do attempt to come into the United States. And then the policy was formally in force for the entire southern border from April 2018 to June 2018. But later reports have actually demonstrated the practice began at least a year earlier than the public announcement. Now, the policy has come to an end on the 20th of June 2018, President Trump signed an executive order designed to end family separation specifically, while continuing the zero tolerance policy by simply detaining families as intact units. And because of poor record keeping the administration that no way to easily reunited separated parents from their children. And when it became clear that zero tolerance could not be sustained while keeping families together within the scope of the law, Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, who is now the acting Homeland Security Secretary, announced on the 25th of June 2018, that the the agency would cease referring every person caught crossing the border illegally for prosecution, which effectively ended zero tolerance policy. And the courts have stepped in on the issue of reuniting these families in June of 2018 a federal court ordered the government to reunify separated families with minor children under five years of age within 14 days of the order and families with minor children age five and over within 30 days of the order. On separate September 20, 2018, the government reported to the court that it had unified or otherwise released 2000 of the 2500 children over five years of age who were separated from a parent and being eligible for unification by the government. However, a report released in January of this year revealed that while the Department of Home Health and Human

Services had previously said that the total number of children separated from their parents was less than 30,000, a new investigation revealed that the actual number of separated children was several thousand higher with the exact number unknown due to poor record keeping. HHS officials had noticed a steep increase in separating children from the summer of 2017. So this this policy had the intended result of essentially inviting chaos for these families.

Rushad Thomas 12:31

So let's talk about the the Flores settlement, a very important piece of this whole family separation dilemma. So the Flores settlement stipulates that migrant children must be detained in quote the least restrictive setting possible unquote, and can only be held for about 20 days. It also requires child detention facilities to be licensed and inspected by the states they're in. On June 21, 2018, the Justice Department asked US District Court to alter the 2015 Reno v. Flores to ruling permit the government to hold families together and indefinitely in detention. Fortunately, the judge declined the administration's request and on the 21st of August 2019, the administration announced it was ending the Flores agreement and replacing it with a new policy scheduled to take place in 60 days. The new policy will allow families with children to be detained indefinitely until their cases are decided. It will also allow the federal government to license and inspect facilities rather than states which would essentially be the fox guarding the hen house. Fortunately, 19 states and the District of Columbia have sued the administration to block this.

Rushad Thomas 13:35

Alright, so let's discuss the asylum policy changes now. First, before we do the policy changes, let's just discuss what asylum is under the law. So asylum seekers are foreign nationals, who present themselves at US ports of entry, which include land borders, international airports, and seaports, seeking protection because they have suffered persecution or fear that they will suffer persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group (like LGBT), or political opinion. There are two paths to asylum. In affirmative asylum, an individual is in the United States currently or has arrived at a of Port of Entry, has declared his or her application for asylum to US Citizenship and Immigration Services within one year of their arrival in the country. So these are the folks who may already be in the United States or are just presenting themselves to the United States at a port of entry. And with those folks, the decision about their asylum case can be made by USCIS, US Citizenship and Immigration Services officer, asylum officer. With defensive asylum, this affects particularly undocumented immigrants who are undergoing deportation proceedings and they present an asylum claim before an immigration judge, so are essentially they're in the process of being deported but they claim asylum to hopefully prevent themselves from being deported.

Rushad Thomas 15:03

Okay, so the Trump administration has moved in a number of ways to discourage asylum seeking. So in June 2018, the Department of Justice implemented a policy to deny asylum to those fleeing gender-based violence, that is violence against women, which is the predominant form of gender violence, gender based violence, or gang violence, overturning a precedent established by a 2016 Board of Immigration Appeals decision. In December in December of 2018, a federal judge overturned the limitation on asylum for gender based violence or gang violence as inconsistent with the Immigration and Nationality Act, which governs our asylum laws. On November 9, 2018, President Trump

suspended the rights of asylum to any migrant crossing the US-Mexico border outside of a lawful port of entry. In November, 10 days later, November 19 2018, a district court in Northern California issued an injunction against implementing that particular policy and that injunction was upheld by the US Supreme Court on December 21 2018. In August 2019, a district court here in DC ruled to vacate the interim final rule establishing this particular asylum ban because it violated the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Rushad Thomas 16:14

On January 25th 2019, Homeland Security Department announced the Migrant Protection Protocols, which are colloquially known as the Remain in Mexico policy. And this policy allows the government to release migrants with asylum claims to Mexico to await their asylum hearings in the United States. I'm not sure if you've heard this, this phrase before, but many people who know have knowledge of the Mexican government's dealings with the administration in the last several years have said that Mexico did not has not paid for the wall, but Mexico has built the wall because the Mexican government has cooperated with the Trump administration on a variety of detrimental policies that are essentially offloading a lot of the irregular migration the administration wants to discourage to Mexico. So not only is the Mexican government receiving US asylum applicants and housing them along the border while they await the asylum hearings in the United States, they've also increased their patrols of their own southern border to prevent asylum seekers from Central America for coming through. And the administration has been very successful in pressuring the Mexican government to cooperate with them in all of these very harmful policies. As of June 2019, over 12,000 migrants have been returned to Mexico under that policy. In July 2015 or July 15 2019, the Homeland Security Department and the Justice Department announced an interim final rule to take effect on July 16, that would rule foreigners across the US-Mexico border in eligible for asylum if they had not previously applied for asylum in countries that they have traveled through, effectively barring asylum claims on the border from nationals of Central America, Haiti, and Cuba. On September 11 2019, the US Supreme Court permitted the Trump administration to implement that particular policy, while the legal fight over it plays out in the courts.

Rushad Thomas 18:10

Going along with that the administration has been signing these side deals essentially with the governments of Central America that are similar to what's called a safe third country agreement. A safe third country agreement basically, is an agreement between two nations, the only one we have currently is with Canada, that says that if someone applies for asylum in one country, they are not allowed to apply for asylum in another. And it makes sense, because you don't want people to shop around for asylum essentially, because asylum is a humanitarian thing. And if they're in a safe country, it shouldn't like you know, Canada, the United States are relatively similar. We have well built economies, rule of law, states, civil human rights protections, and our laws. So it makes sense for the United States and Canada to have a safe third country agreement, but United States and Honduras are very different places, the United States and El Salvador are very different places. United States and Guatemala are very different places. These new agreements that the federal government has signed with those three countries would require any migrants on their way to the US to seek protection in those countries first, and if they have not sought protection in those countries first and been denied, then if they present themselves at the US border, claiming legal asylum, this is a legal right under our own law

and other international law these people have, the US government has decided that it will reject their asylum claims. It's a very disheartening policy, and they will send those people back to Central America, where rampant crime, violence, and corruption is driving tens of thousands of them to flee.

Rushad Thomas 19:47

Alright, so now we'll talk about public charge. So public charge is a concept that's long established in US immigration law. The first mention of public charge came in the Immigration Act of 1882. And as I have here on the screen, language from the 1882 Immigration Act, colloquially known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, which says that immigrants who are unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge, quote, or unsuitable for American citizenship, and therefore denied. I find it very odd that this provision made its way into immigration law in 1882 when to my knowledge, we didn't have a public welfare system. Public charge has been used to deny both immigrant and non immigrant visa. So that's not it's not just folks who want to permanently settle United States, it also empowers federal government to prohibit admission to people who are just coming here who want to visit temporarily already. So now we'll go into some of the regulatory definitions, which is important to understand the changes that the administration has proposed. So in May 1999, the former agency Immigration and Naturalization Service INS which is now USCIS issued field guidance on deportability and inadmissibility on public charge grounds. So that rule said that someone primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of public cash assistance for income maintenance, or institutionalization for long term care at government expense. So it specifically talked about cash assistance making someone a public charge. I list the disqualifying systems under that regulation, which includes Supplemental Security Income, cash assistance from TANF, or state and local cash assistance grants, so all of those programs would would disqualify person from obtaining a green card. But the guidance from 1999 explicitly excludes forms of in kind assistance: Medicaid, food stamps, Women, Infants and Children, unemployment insurance, housing benefits, childcare subsidies, etc, etc. So those things were explicitly excluded by the previous regulation.

Rushad Thomas 21:50

Now with this administration on the 12th of August of this year, USCIS announced the new rule restricting poor immigrants from obtaining lawful permanent status and the rule basically what it does is it does two things. Number one, it adds those previously excluded programs that I listed, so like Medicaid and WIC and and food stamps, etc housing benefits, and then it also empowers immigration officials to predict whether immigrants will become a public charge in the future. I hope my passionate disdain for this new regulation is coming through through the through my voice, because it essentially gives immigration officials the power to decide whether or not the only it doesn't it doesn't put a mark against you. Just if you've already access any of these benefits. It allows immigration officials to deny you a green card if they anticipate in the future that you may access these programs. How in the world isn't is an immigration officials supposed to have the clairvoyance to determine whether or not a person is going to become a quote unquote public charge in the future? It makes no sense whatsoever. If you remember the news reports from around the time the administration announced this decision, USCIS acting director Ken Cuccinelli was on I think the Today Show and and presenter asked him about the Emma Lazarus poem that's on the Statue of Liberty that says, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." And he said in a twist on the the butchering of the of the poem, yes, give me your your tired and your poor who can stand on their own two feet. Well, I'm sorry.

But the United States has never been a country that says you're only allowed to enter the United States if you've already hit a home run. The vast majority of us, if our ancestors had to apply if these rules had applied and our ancestors were brought into the United States, none of us would be here. So it's a very underhanded way to radically transform our legal immigration system. This is not dealing with undocumented immigrants. These are people who are following the rules and going through the process as convoluted as it is, as it stands under the law, these are the people who are following the rules, but the administration is adding more and more barriers to their ability to access legal paths toward immigration.

Rushad Thomas 24:13

So now we'll talk about so-called sanctuary cities and administration's enforcement priorities. So on the 25th of January 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13768, which among other things, significantly increased the number of immigrants considered a priority for deportation. So under President Obama an immigrant who had been ruled removable, would only be considered a priority for deportation if they were convicted also of a serious crime, such as a felony or multiple misdemeanor. And this policy makes sense because the administration or the government has scarce resources, we can't deport everyone. There's just not enough. There's not enough money. There's not enough officers. There's not enough resources in the world for us to deport everyone. So it makes sense for us to focus on deporting people who are actually criminals who have harmed people in the United States and who you know, it would be more sense for us to prioritize. Not prioritize, hotel maids and farm workers and things, people who are just here living their lives working and trying to provide for their families. But under the Trump administration, immigrants can be considered a removal priority, even if they're convicted only of minor crimes or even if they're merely accused of such criminal acts. So it significantly expands the class of undocumented people who are deportation priorities. So now what is a sanctuary city? In layman's terms, a sanctuary city is a municipal jurisdiction that limits its cooperation with federal immigration law enforcement agencies, and there are a lot of reasons why a jurisdiction would call itself or designate itself a sanctuary. For one, communities that have large numbers of undocumented immigrants, they want those people who are members of their communities to feel comfortable working with local law enforcement in the instance that they are victims of crimes, or that they were witnesses to crimes and they need their assistance in prosecuting, holding those who are guilty of crimes to account. When undocumented populations or immigrant populations know that the local law enforcement in their community is cooperating with federal law enforcement on immigration, they're less likely to cooperate in ordinary routine law enforcement proceedings. And it also actually harms victims most because if you're an undocumented immigrant who's the victim of crime, you're less likely to go report that crime to your local law enforcement. If you know that reporting, you're if you're a woman, you reporting your rate for reporting, you're a burglary or reporting whatever might lead to your own deportation. So it makes a lot of sense for and not only that municipal law enforcement are not federal immigration law enforcement, it makes no sense for local municipal law enforcement to be involved in enforcing federal immigration law. And we already Lord knows we already spend more on federal immigration and border enforcement than we do on any other federal law enforcement priority, combined. More than the FBI, more than the CIA. So it's not like the federal government is not or the immigration enforcement authorities aren't are lacking in resources. Lord knows they have plenty of those. That's why a community would designate itself sanctuary. But the administration has had a line against sanctuary cities from the very beginning, has mostly been using

financial coercion to discourage communities from becoming sanctuaries. The primary method has been to withhold federal grants from communities that are sanctuaries and those communities naturally have had pushed back against that legally in the courts. And on the 12th of July of this year, a federal appeals court endorsed the Justice Department's decision to give preferential treatment in the awarding of community policing grants to cities that cooperate with immigration authorities. And the two to one opinion overturned a nationwide injunction issued last year by federal judge in Los Angeles. The appeals court said that awarding extra points in the application process to cities that cooperate was consistent with the goals of the grant program created by Congress.

Rushad Thomas 28:13

Alrighty. So now we'll talk about some of the deportation relief programs that the administration has threatened. First, we'll talk about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA. So President Obama's DACA executive order established a program that allowed around 800,000 young adults or also also known as dreamers after the DREAM Act, which is which would protect them in statute law, but hasn't been passed by Congress. And these are 800,000 young adults who were brought illegally to the United States as children, and it would allow them to work legally without fear of deportation. In September of 2017, President Trump announced that he was canceling this executive order with effect from six months and he called for legislation to be enacted before the protection phased out in March of 2018. And as of now the program's cancellation is on hold by court order. A lawsuit on the issue is going to be before the US Supreme Court during this term, which began at the beginning of this month, Supreme Court terms run from October to June. So at some point in the next, you know, sort of eight months, the Supreme Court will hear a case on on the cancellation of DACA. Fingers crossed that they rule the right way. And then also fingers crossed, that Congress passes the DREAM Act, but wouldn't hold my breath, sadly.

Rushad Thomas 29:24

All right. And then the other deportation relief programs would be Temporary Protected Status. Temporary Protected Status, also known as TPS, is a program the federal government grants to immigrants who are in the country, in the United States in the wake of national emergencies in their various countries of origin. So let's say you're from Haiti, and there's an earthquake or you're from Syria and your government is collapsing and there's a civil war. If you are a Haitian national or a Syria national, the US federal government can give you TPS, which says essentially protect you from deportation gives you work authorization and allows you to, you know, essentially ride it out here in the United States until conditions in your home country get better. We have many groups of people who have had TPS over many years because of whatever disaster or situation in their home countries and many of these people have been in the, in the United States for decades now on TPS and they've bought homes. They're married to US citizens they have US citizen children, they have jobs. So it's really kind of arbitrary and capricious for the administration to remove revoke their TPS and make them deportation priorities when they been legal residents in the United States for decades in many cases, and naturally, immigrants faced with losing their status have have sued the administration in court, those cases are ongoing. And then I included a picture of folks advocating for TPS for Venezuelans because the Congress, the House of Representatives last month passed a law to grant TPS to Venezuelans. I'm sure you know, very well, the Venezuelan society is a basket case at the moment because their government is corrupt and authoritarian. And the conditions are so bad in Venezuela that

the US government has the State Department has discouraged US citizens from visiting Venezuela. So it seems rather strange that we would deport people back to Venezuela and there are around 200,000 Venezuelans currently present in the United States who could benefit from TPS. The Office of Government Relations through the Episcopal Public Policy Network, our action alert for this week is to advocate for TPS. So that was a lot. But thank you for listening. And if I was not clear on anything, or if you want more detail, or you have any questions, we can deal with those in the q&a. Now we'll hand it over to Kendall.

Kendall Martin 31:45

Thank you, Rushad. Now we will turn to how you can participate through messaging and advocacy. We know that one of the ways we can effectively address the anti-immigrant, anti-refugee narrative is through education and advocacy. A key component of both of those things is messaging. We live in a world where people can easily access information to confirm what they already believe. Confirmation bias allows us to stay within the bubble of our beliefs and opinions without actually entering in a conversation or asking questions of the other side. When we seek to change hearts and minds about what it means to be a welcoming America, we have to first set the frame. Frames are sets of choices about how information is presented. It's what we emphasize, how we explain it, and what we leave unsaid. A quick example of how word choice matters as it relates to frames. The terms illegal alien and undocumented worker invoke two different frames to discuss the issue of immigration. Using the word illegal suggests an enforcement solution and carries with it the sense of moral judgment against one who has broken the law, it can create an emotional opposition. Undocumented, by contrast, suggests a paperwork solution. It challenges one to solve a problem that, if accomplished, can activate the brain and commit the person to the solution. Each term triggers a different frame on immigration and implicitly or unconsciously filters and sorts the facts that suggest a very different set of solutions.

Kendall Martin 33:12

The second component is leading with values over facts, numbers, or statistics. Finding a shared value with people who believe differently than you can open an honest and thoughtful conversation. When we talk about immigration, we can lead with values rooted in opportunity, an ideal that everyone deserves a fair chance to achieve his or her full potential. Focus on values that are part of our human rights, the rights we all have, simply by virtue of our humanity: our right to equality, mobility, voice, redemption, communication, security.

Kendall Martin 33:45

The next thing is to know your audience. The first thing to remember is you are not your own audience. It is normal to overestimate the degree to which other people think like we do, and this is called false consensus bias and experts and advocates working on social issues frequently fall into this trap. People assume what moves them to action will work on the person they're speaking to. But don't fall into this trap. People are moved by common values, explanation, and solutions that they can see themselves in.

Kendall Martin 34:14

Finally, tell stories. To build support and increase understanding, people need to hear stories. Stories that challenge the assumptions they hold about refugees and immigrants and their relationship to the

community. The way we set the stage for sharing the facts and figures of refugee resettlement is through telling stories. Our brains are hardwired for storytelling. It's the way we understand our world, the way that we share process information. It's all through telling and sharing stories, and you can share your personal story and still meet your audience where they are. So as you engage in advocacy and education, focus on the power of story and the values that connect all of us. I invite you to take a deeper dive into reframing the narrative by joining Partners in Welcome. We offer learning modules not only about the refugee resettlement program, but also on messaging, advocacy, and asset-based community development. Visit episcopalmigrationministries.org/partnersinwelcome and sign up for free today, we would love to have you join our community of supporters and learners.

Allison Duvall 35:15

Thank you and Rushad over to you to speak about the Episcopal Church's ministry of advocacy.

Rushad Thomas 35:22

So I'm sure after listening to my presentation, everyone's like, oh, my goodness, this is all a lot of really sad stuff. But I don't want you to feel disempowered or without hope, because there's a lot you can do to make your voice heard on all of these issues that we face in the immigration space. So first thing I would encourage you to do is study church teaching on public policy issues. We have a wealth of resolutions from General Convention and other resources that are rooted in our Gospel values related to this issue. And then you should subscribe to our Episcopal Public Policy Network alerts. So that whenever a pressing issue comes up, we send out these alerts that allow you to send messages to your members of Congress and to stay up to date on everything that's going on. And then also, you can follow EPPN on Facebook and Twitter to keep up with us on social media. And all of this goes together with using your voice. So sending emails to your representatives and senators, you can do that through our EPPN alerts, and then protect participating in local and national advocacy. Share our posts on social media, retweet us, we can amplify our reach so much more if you help us do that. And then we encourage you to do things like call into C-SPAN and your local radio stations like NPR and share your views about immigration and why immigrants are so wonderful. And then you can write letters to the editor in your local paper. We have lots of talking points on our website that can help you to do that as well. And then the last thing I always like to end my advocacy spiel on is a spin on Padre Pio's phrase pray, hope, and don't worry: pray, hope, and take action. In my own life, I think that as I'm in this world of politics up here on Capitol Hill, so much of what we see coming out of this, this town does not reflect my Gospel values and the Gospel values that the Episcopal Church stands for. So for me, staying rooted in prayer and communion with the Lord helps me to make it through the day. And really process all the things that are going on that make me so upset and discourage me but I my ultimate hope is in the Lord Jesus. And everything that I do is in his name and for him and through him and in him. So I just pray that you also would look to the source of all of our hope in our life which is our Lord Jesus Christ, and lean upon him for your your joy and your hope as you reflect upon these issues, and then hopefully, from going to the source of life, which is our Lord Jesus, He will inspire you through the power of the Holy Spirit, to pay forward all the the love and the grace and the joy that he's given to you in your heart by the way you love your neighbor as yourself and particularly our immigrant brothers and sisters, so thank you.

Allison Duvall 38:11

Thank you Rushad Partners in Welcome is EMM's newest church engagement program. It is both a ministry network and an online learning community. Through Partners in Welcome we are mapping immigration-related ministries across the Episcopal Church. And we're also creating educational materials, toolkits, resources, and other materials to equip, encourage, empower Partners in Welcome members to welcome newcomers, become advocates, and launch and strengthen local ministries of welcome. One of the wonderful resources that we've just developed with several Partners in Welcome members is our brand new Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations. We just did a soft release of this resource this past Monday and next week there will be a press release from the Episcopal Church's Office of Public Affairs going out to the wider church, you can go ahead and request the toolkit at bit.ly/EMMTtoolkit. You can see it there on your screen. Once you submit your form, it will be automatically emailed to you. So if you don't receive an auto reply with all of the resources for download, please do let us know and we'll get it to you straight away. And we are now to the q&a portion of today's webinar. There is a question, Rushad, for you that came in quite a bit earlier about the statistics. I believe this might have been in some of the earlier slides in the table. Where do statistics come from that validate both the both of the positions and the responses from the first slide or two, especially in regards to crime rates? Could you speak to that?

Rushad Thomas 39:45

Yeah, sure. There are a wide array of wonderful resources that compile statistics on all sorts of information about immigrants. The Migration Policy Institute provides a lot of those sorts of resources. The Cato Institute has done excellent work particularly on the issue of so called immigrant crime, debunking the notion that immigrants are have a higher crime rate than native born Americans. And then there are a number of what really any any academic demographer, labor economist that you look at will show you that immigrant labor complements that of US workers. There's no, there's one very skeptical professor, economics professor called George Borjas, who has written a number of things on immigrants' impact on labor, and even he admits that immigrants overall increase the number of jobs and our net benefit to the economy. His only thing is that undocumented immigrants might compete with people without high school diplomas, but for the economy overall, even he concedes that immigrants are a net benefit to the economy.

Allison Duvall 40:57

Thank you, Rushad. There is a question from Susan, who asks either specific bills that we should reference in correspondence with Senators and members of Congress.

Rushad Thomas 41:08

Yes, absolutely. So I mentioned the Venezuela TPS bill earlier. That's that is the subject of our action alert this week. It was passed the House by a large bipartisan majority. I believe there, there's majorities for it in the Senate, but the Senate is a slow and lumbering institution, sadly. So we would encourage you particularly to go to our Office of Government Relations website, and you can send letters to your Senator in support of Venezuela TPS. But there are other laws that we support or other acts of Congress or pieces of legislation, bills that we support, as well, including the GRACE Act, which would set the annual refugee missions number to 95,000, which is the historic average, over the last 40 years of the program, and we have a variety of overall legislative goals that maybe there's not like a specific bill that is working its way through the pipeline now, but any, any support you can offer to your

members of Congress for comprehensive immigration reform that provides a pathway to citizenship, for humane detention policies and alternatives to detention for immigration, that supports the DREAM Act for the DACA population, all of that support and the advocacy plays a is very important. So I would encourage you to advocate on those issues as well.

Allison Duvall 42:26

Thank you, Rushad. And seeing that there are no other questions, and we are right about at five o'clock eastern time, I'm going to transition us to some follow up information. So Rushad if you'll speak to your work in the advocacy ministry of the church, and then I'll speak to EMM.

Rushad Thomas 42:41

Absolutely. So please follow us on social media on twitter @theEPPN will keep you informed on everything that's going on. And if you go to our website, advocacy.episcopalchurch.org, you can stay up to date on everything that we're doing, and I hope that you will use your voice to elevate all of these important issues that are so important to our faith. So thank you very much.

Allison Duvall 43:08

Thanks Rushad and then we do really encourage all of you, listeners, audience members to stay in touch with Episcopal Migration Ministries. We are episcopalmigrationministries.org on social media, we are @EMMrefugees. And then we have a video channel on Vimeo vimeo.com/EMMrefugees. So thank you all so much for joining us today. Thank you and God bless. Bye bye.

Allison Duvall 43:32

Stay tuned for our next episode, which will feature a recording from our November 7th virtual workshop: What now? Building partnerships for a changing refugee ministry.

Kendall Martin 43:42

We also invite you to join us this Advent for weekly podcast reflections from both lay and clergy leaders across the church.

Allison Duvall 43:50

And in this season of giving and Thanksgiving, we invite you to join in the work of welcome by making a donation to Episcopal Migration Ministries, no gift is too small and all are putting us to welcome our newest neighbors. Visit episcopalmigrationministries.org/give or text "hometown", to 91999

Kendall Martin 44:11

Our theme song composer is Abraham Mwindi Icando, find his music at abrahammwindi.bandcamp.com.

Allison Duvall 44:18

Thanks for joining us today listeners. Until next time, peace be with you and all those you consider home.