

## **HB 27 Testimony of Ohio faith leaders to the Ohio Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee.**

We, the undersigned, are faith leaders from across the state, representing various faiths and traditions. We have studied Ohio HB 27, especially the sections limiting access to the workers compensation program for injured Ohio workers. The bill targets workers who were hurt on the job after having been hired by employers, but who are defined by this Ohio bill as "illegal" or "unauthorized." This policy, though targeted at a certain group of immigrants, is simply an affront to common sense and our common faiths.

While no sacred text can give direct advice for resolving immigration problems, guiding principles for what might be fair and just immigration policies are not hard to find.

Senators trying to decide how to vote on this bill need look no further than the Ten Commandments. "The seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work - you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns." Exodus 20:8. This mandatory rest day, captured in writing during Moses' encounter with his almighty, is surely one of our planet's oldest labor laws. And it carries with it a crystal clear principle: we must insist on equality and cannot establish a two-tiered system for labor standards. Establishing a separate set of rules for certain types of immigrant injuries may very well be impractical, as the Bureau of Workers Compensation administrator has indicated. It is also wholly inconsistent with the Ten Commandments. A 'yes' vote would immortalize our state's opposition to a principle so basic that it was shared on Mount Sinai.

Cheating an injured wage earner, depriving him or her of equal access to Ohio's justice system, will get our state nowhere. While we draw from the Hebrew Bible here in raising these points, other similar principles abound in other faith traditions. Accordingly, we come together to pray for you and ask that you seek the advice of your own pastor, priest, rabbi, imam, or spiritual adviser as you decide how to vote.

Sincerely,

Sister Sally Duffy for Sisters of Charity Ministry Foundation  
Dan Schneider, for Unitarian Universalist Justice of Ohio  
Dr. Troy Jackson for the Amos Project  
Karen Dabdoub, Ohio Council on Islamic Relations  
Mother Paula Jackson, Church of Our Savior  
Sister Monica McGloin, Cincinnati Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice  
Sisters Jean Miller, Tracy Kemme, and Caren Herring