



## Human Rights on the Ballot

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With every day approaching November 3rd, it has felt increasingly true: this is a critical election and there will be tremendous implications from the results. Human rights issues including racial justice, LGBTQ rights, health care access, climate justice, Covid-19, and immigrants rights, are on our ballots this election.

My work focuses on immigration and refugee issues. This administration has created an abundance of anti-immigrant policies, starting with terminating the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and ending Temporary Protective Status (TPS). DACA and TPS benefit over one million immigrants who have been in this country for decades and who are now in danger of being detained, deported and separated from their families if these programs are not saved. The Muslim ban has limited immigration from Muslim-majority countries and stoked increased discrimination against our Muslim siblings of faith.

As Covid-19 ravages on, Black, indigenous, immigrant communities and people of color are disproportionately affected. Mass detention and mass incarceration continue to increase without accountability. There are bulldozers running through environmentally protected areas and Tohono O'odham sacred land to build a wall on the border. This administration has disregarded our own U.S. laws and congressional intent by shutting down the asylum program and slashing the refugee resettlement program by 80% with multiple attempts to ban refugees and asylum seekers. The horrific family separation policy has left children waiting in dangerous peril in makeshift camps or shelters on the southern border.

The ongoing attacks on humanitarian programs illuminates the precarious nature of our own democracy, a vision that has never been fully realized for a nation that grapples with its original sins of slavery, genocide, and patriarchy. The same divisions that caused civil war continue to haunt our progress forward. The infrastructure around anti-immigrant nativism and the racial caste system were built into the architecture of this country.

And now that this system of injustice has been exposed in new ways, there are new opportunities to raise consciousness and awareness. As new generations rise up to demand Black Lives Matter, Love is Love, and Sanctuary for All, we can still build towards a world where all people are recognized as God's children and treated with dignity and equity. There is still hope.

We cannot hold back; we must press forward in a bold and prophetic way. We must follow the voices of impacted leaders and remember the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's warning that "History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people." This quote is as relevant today as it was in 1959.

As part of our faith, let us together raise our voices through prayer and action as we organize and participate in the social movement that will change generations to come. Every soul must get to the poll and let our faith, our values, and our votes be heard loud and clear. For more information go to [UCC Our Faith Our Vote](#) to find out more about the issues. When you vote, post on social media why you are voting at [#UCCVotes](#). Encourage your faith communities, families, and friends to vote and together we can encourage record turnout levels of civic participation as people bring their voices to the polls. And no matter the election results, our faithfulness and commitment must remain equally fervent as we continue the work towards a just world for all.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Noel Andersen is the UCC & CWS Grassroots Coordinator for Immigrants' Rights for the United Church of Christ.

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