

who wrote the essay I entered into the RECORD, all three important religious leaders from Spartanburg, South Carolina, this is how they put it:

Immigration reform is an urgent need—inaction carries a profound human cost and we consistently see this in our ministries.

Hardworking, contributing members of our society live in constant fear of deportation. The victimization of individuals and families goes unreported, and families are torn apart as American-citizen children lose one or both of their parents to deportation proceedings.

They add:

We stand at a critical crossroads. Our broken and antiquated immigration system has precipitated an economic and moral crisis that we can ignore no longer.

Listen to your church elders. While you do nothing, the number on the board behind me continues to increase and the deportation machine continues.

If you don't, I and millions of others across this land will continue insisting that the President exercise his authority to stop deportation and separation of American families. We will force the President to act, and I assure you we will win that fight.

[From the Greenville News, Feb. 22, 2014]

GOD OFTEN REMINDS US TO WELCOME  
IMMIGRANTS

(By Ricky Eason, Jim Goodroe, and Greg Castillo)

Late last month, House Republicans released standards that will guide their efforts as they move forward on immigration reform. As evangelical leaders, we join voices from the business and law enforcement communities to strongly support this step.

We applaud any progress toward a solution for one of our nation's most complex and critical issues. With President Barack Obama's comments in the State of the Union address, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers' mention in her Republican response, and now the release of these standards, bipartisan support for immigration reform is clear.

In a time of bitter division and partisan politics, we call on our nation's leaders to transcend their differences and pass commonsense, broad reform that will strengthen our economy, make our nation safer, and give our undocumented neighbors an opportunity to come out of the shadows and earn legal status.

As faith leaders who call ourselves "The Three Amigos," we represent the three largest ethnic groups in South Carolina. Although we come from communities with different cultural and political perspectives, we stand united in our Christian commitment to share the Gospel with all peoples (Matthew: 28:19), welcome and love the strangers in our midst (Leviticus 19:34, Matthew 25:31-46), and seek justice in our communities (Isaiah 1:17).

Throughout Scripture, God continually reminds His people to love and welcome the immigrants in their midst. As people who arrive to a strange place with no land, family or connections, immigrants are some of the most vulnerable people in any given community. For this reason, they consistently join widows and orphans in the Biblical "triad of the vulnerable" that God desires to protect (Exodus 22:21-22).

In our combined 60 years of ministry in the Upstate of South Carolina, we have served and ministered to immigrants from all over the world, documented and undocumented.

While undocumented immigrants are often mischaracterized or used abstractly in political arguments, we know these people personally as our neighbors, friends, and brothers and sisters. Immigration reform is an urgent need—inaction carries a profound human cost that we consistently see in our ministries.

Hardworking and contributing members of our society live in constant fear of deportation, the victimization of individuals and families goes unreported, and families are torn apart as American-citizen children lose one or both parents to deportation proceedings. Striking a middle ground between the extreme positions of mass deportation and open borders, we join with House Republicans in advocating for a middle ground where those without documentation can come out of the shadows, make restitution, and get right with the law.

Such an approach is very different from amnesty, which is the absence of legal consequences. Instead, this realistic approach would allow undocumented immigrants to admit culpability and pay their debt to society without separating or harming families or causing undue harm to our nation's economy.

We stand at a critical crossroads. Our broken and antiquated immigration system has precipitated an economic and moral crisis that we can ignore no longer. The Republican standards moved us one step closer to a solution that will protect the border, help grow our economy, and provide an opportunity for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and fully participate in our communities.

The time for further action is now. Congress needs to overcome its doubts, and keep moving toward the legislation that is so desperately needed.

We join other evangelical leaders from across the country in reaffirming our commitment to earnestly pray for Congress and for immigration reform in 2014.

#### MODERNIZING OUR DRUG AND DIAGNOSTICS EVALUATION AND REGULATORY NETWORK CURES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, this week we recognize the work of the tireless advocates for rare diseases. I had the honor of serving as the Republican chair of the Congressional Rare Disease Caucus. I consider it a very important responsibility as part of my service here and an honor to work for innovative treatments, new technologies, and to build an atmosphere of appreciation and understanding on Capitol Hill with the hard work of all the patient advocates. Their passion is often driven by the care of loved ones, and their personal stories are profiles in courage.

Hearing from countless advocates, many of whom are here in Washington this week, gives the members of the caucus renewed energy and purpose. Events held during Rare Disease Week highlight what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done, and there is a lot to do, but we will do it together.

I am working on important legislation in this area, the bipartisan Modernizing Our Drug and Diagnostics

Evaluation and Regulatory Network, or MODDERN, Cures Act. It will update the Nation's drug evaluation process to encourage the discovery and development of new treatments for chronic and rare diseases. The measure will also create a system that rewards efficiency and effectiveness to the benefit of all persons with rare diseases.

The MODDERN Cures Act will encourage the development of drugs abandoned in the development process. It will create a new category of drugs known as dormant therapies for compounds with insufficient patent protection, drugs that offer the promise to treat conditions with unmet medical needs.

Updating regulatory networks such as patent reform will help open the pipeline for new innovations and therapies. Patients with degenerative conditions, cancers, and rare diseases await the genius of these new solutions. While we do not know the cause or cure of many of these rare diseases or cancers, we do know that awareness is the best protection, information is the best tool for innovation, and well-rounded care during and after treatment is the best therapy. That is our mission in the caucus: to work together to find solutions that make a lasting difference.

I again thank the families and the advocates whose challenges we may never completely understand, but whose commitment to their loved ones is unyielding and inspiring. The caucus pursues its mission in their name.

#### COMPREHENSIVE DENTAL REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Children's Dental Health Month. It is a critical part of overall health, yet it is also an issue frequently overlooked.

Too often we think of dental care as an optional service, but in reality, it is a critical component of overall health. Its importance first hit home for me 7 years ago when I learned the story of a young Maryland boy named Deamonte Driver.

In February of 2007, 12-year-old Deamonte came from school with a headache, which had started as a toothache days before. His mother, who worked hard to make ends meet with low-paying jobs, searched for a dentist who would accept Medicaid for her children. She found not one dentist. Let me say that again. She found not one single dentist who would care for her children's teeth.

At wit's end, Deamonte's mother brought him to the emergency room, where he received medication for pain, a sinus infection, and a dental abscess. Unfortunately, that was not enough. The bacteria from Deamonte's cavity spread to his brain, and at 12 years old, he died for lack of a simple procedure