

# Arizona clergy urge U.S. to tackle immigration law: Federal government must take the lead

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Religious leaders active in Arizona interfaith affairs went to Washington in mid-May to tell the state's senators that the federal government, not the state, should take the lead on immigration reform.

The group of Jewish, Methodist, evangelical, Catholic and Episcopal leaders said they oppose Arizona's new law that allows police to question residents about their legal immigration status.

The clergy delegation and their advocates are pushing Republican senators John McCain and Jon Kyl "to step up and show principal leadership to solve the problem," said Kristin Williams of Faith and Public Life, the Washington-based group that helped bring the delegation to Capitol Hill.

The delegation included United Methodist bishop Minerva Carcaño of Phoenix, her church's first Hispanic woman bishop, and Roman Catholic bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, the vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"I'm here representing evangelicals," said Gary Kinnaman, an evangelical pastor from Phoenix, after a morning meeting with McCain. "I support John McCain," declared Kinnaman, and added that he would not support open borders.

Kinnaman was one of several evangelical leaders who signed a detailed reform blueprint spearheaded by the conservative group Liberty Counsel. He said more issues need to be addressed beyond border security. The "shadow culture" and dangerous conditions facing illegal immigrants won't be solved with deportation but rather legal protection and a path to legalization, he said. *-Religion News Service*