

*Challenges and  
Opportunities...  
for Fairness and Justice  
in Migration*

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

[www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)

# Global Migration

*Some 225 million people are in migration around the world today, according to United Nations agency figures.*



While global migration today is facilitated by technology, communications and air travel...

...dire economic conditions and political and civil strife continue to propel the dramatic and increasing movement of people, particularly within and from the Global South.

*Since 1990, there has been a 50 % increase in the number of migrants worldwide.*

- About 25% of this population is composed of **refugees and asylum seekers**.
- Another 25% are “**internally displaced people**” – they do not cross international borders but are nonetheless migrants within their own countries.
- About 25% cross borders without immigration documents – these are the so-called “illegals,” the undocumented, or **irregular** migrants.

# Effect of U.S. Policies on Migration: The Case of NAFTA

## 1986: The IRCA 'Commission'

- Bipartisan body legislated by **Immigration Reform and Control Act** to study economic roots of migration, including study flow of migration across US-Mexico border
- Conclusion: "People displaced by poverty"
- Prescription: NAFTA
- "...the United States should expedite the development of a U.S.-Mexico free trade area and encourage its incorporation with Canada into a North American free trade area..."

**1994:  
NAFTA &  
Operation  
Gatekeeper:**

- Created “funnel effect” to most dangerous border sectors
- Channel flow of exploitable labor

# Since 1994...

Agricultural exports  
from US to Mexico:  
\$4.6 to \$9.8 billion  
(\$2.5 billion in corn)

Corn prices in Mexico  
↓ 70%

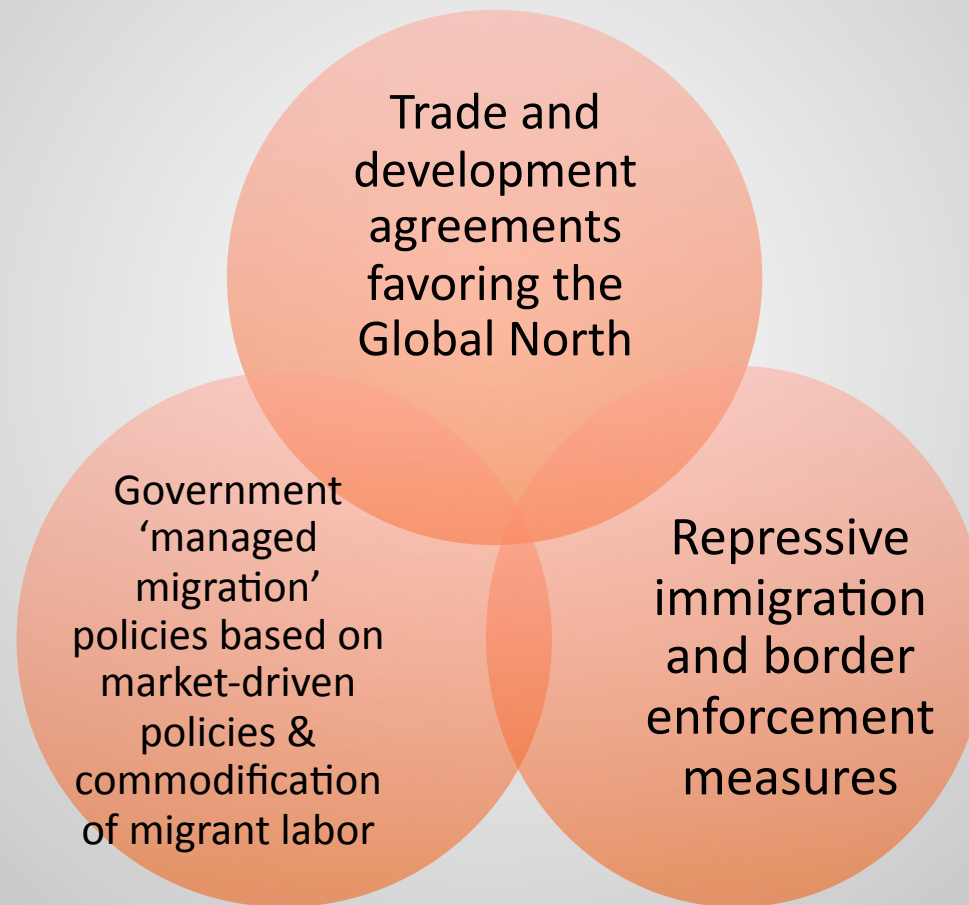
Displacement of 1.7  
million family farmers

Loss of food security,  
affordability of  
healthcare

U.S. subsidies to corn  
sector = \$10.5 billion  
annually (> 10x total  
Mexican agricultural  
budget)

US corn obtains 70%  
world market share

# Global Triangle of Destructive Policies Affecting Migration





# Repressive Enforcement:

Militarization, Criminalization, Exploitation

- 1993 – Clinton’s “prevention through deterrence” strategy
- 1994: Operation Gatekeeper
- Post 9/11: PATRIOT Act, Operation Tarmac, Alien Absconder Initiative, NCIC database, special registration
- 2010: Obama \$600m increase for border “security”
- Result: Funneling of migrants through dangerous, desolate desert, mountain regions

## US 1994-2008

- 8,000+ dead migrants found along US-Mexico border + unknown not found
- 400% increase in detentions
- Doubling of jail-beds for immigrant detainees

## EU 1990-2000

- 10,000+ dead migrant bodies around Lampedusa, Canary Islands
- 3x number of Frontex troops
- Walls around Ceuta, Melilla, Greece-Turkey

# Managed Migration

- Migrants make economic contributions to sending and receiving countries
- Migration must be “managed” according to market conditions and labor needs
- Migrants reduced to labor “commodity” – used and disposed by employers
- Temporary/guestworker programs becomes a cornerstone policy – “circular migration”
- Global South governments rely on remittances as a development policy – Labor Exportation Programs (LEPs) e.g., 10% of Filipinos work abroad

These conditions worldwide have also contributed to the influx of women—and their children—into the migrant stream. Almost half of all migrants are now women – leading to what is called the “feminization of migration.”



# Why do women migrate from the world's rural areas?

Corporate land grabbing, the impacts of climate change such as floods, severe storms and drought; lack of decent job opportunities and high levels of work informality; rural poverty; lack of quality public services; gender and racial discrimination, war...

# Women Migrants in the U.S.

- ❖ Almost 20 million immigrant women live in the United States today.
- ❖ Nearly half of all female immigrants were naturalized citizens in 2008.
- ❖ An estimated 3 million are undocumented.



❖ 53% came from Latin America

❖ 27% are from Asia

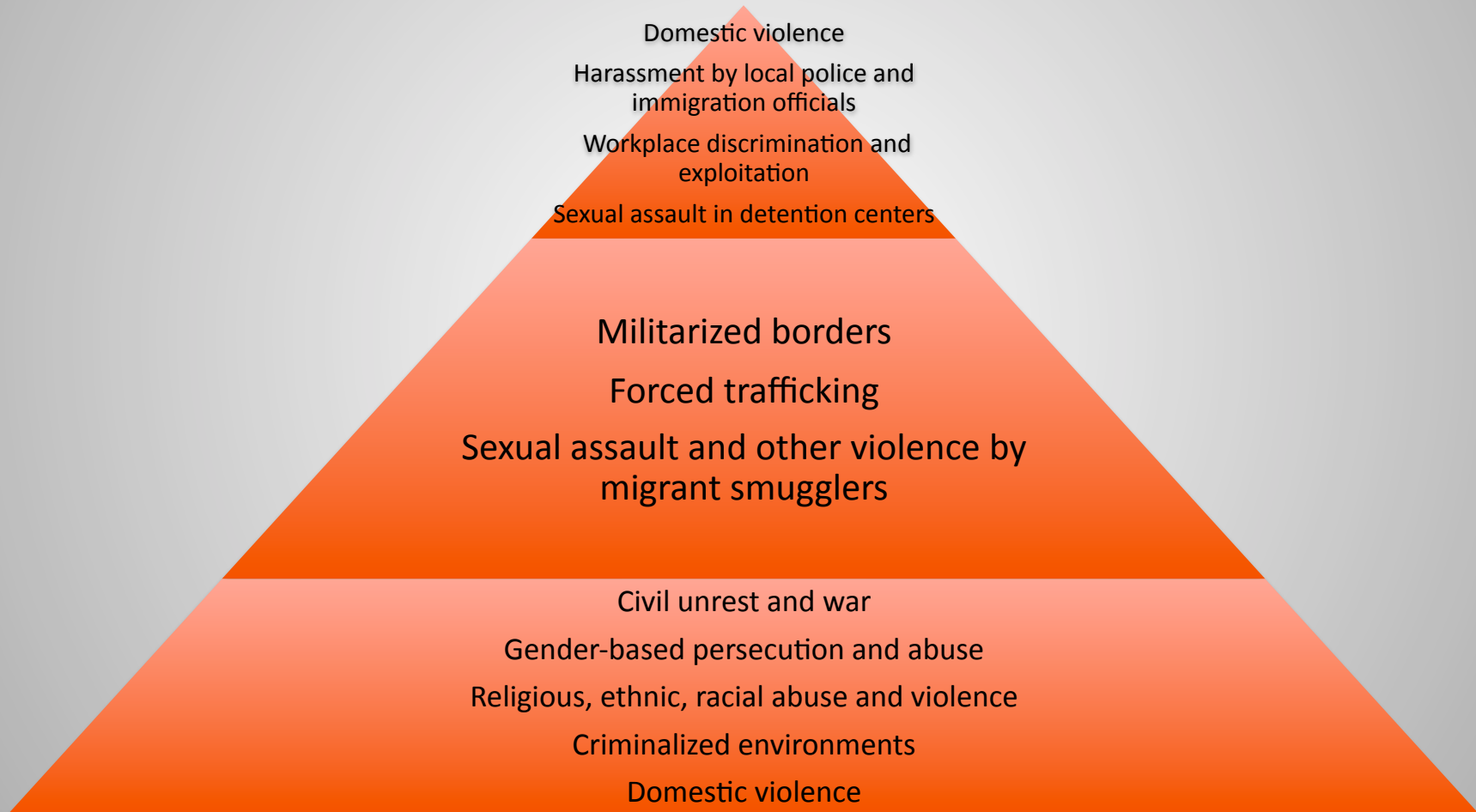
❖ 4% are from Africa

❖ 16% came from Europe and elsewhere

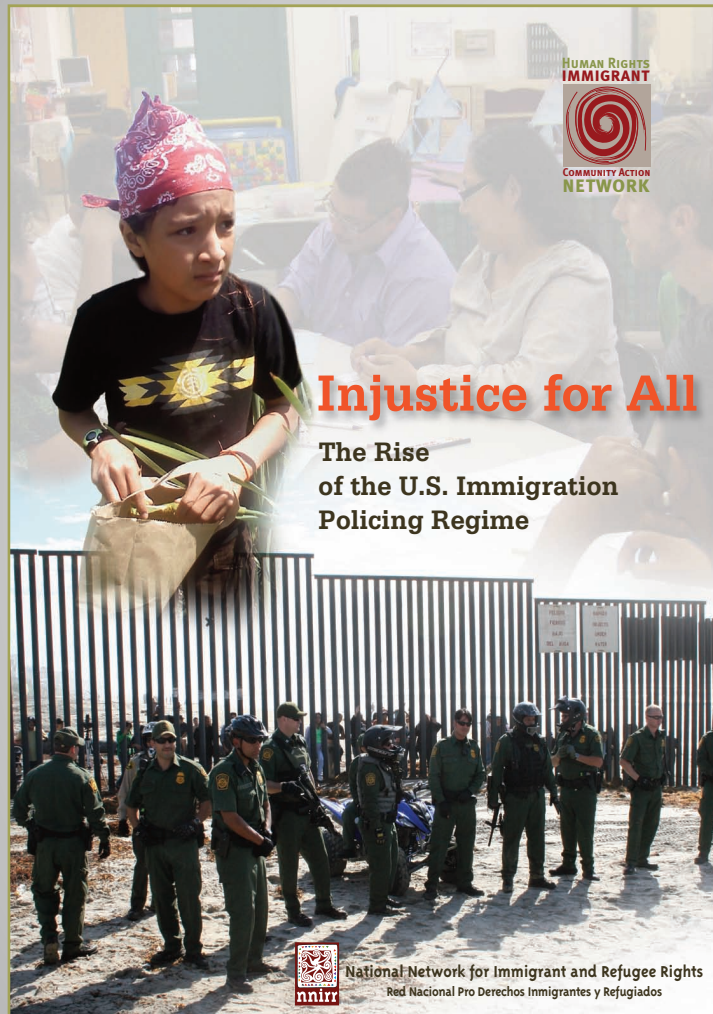


# Pyramid of Abuse

The experiences of some migrants are built upon layers of abuse and rights violations, in their home countries, in transit, and in their new countries.







NNIRR's latest national report  
spotlighted the consolidation of  
government enforcement  
infrastructure:

*"The U.S. government has built  
a brutal system of immigration  
control and policing that  
criminalizes immigration  
status, normalizes the forcible  
separation of families,  
destabilizes communities and  
workplaces, and fuels  
widespread civil rights  
violations."*

## *The tragic consequences of immigration policing*

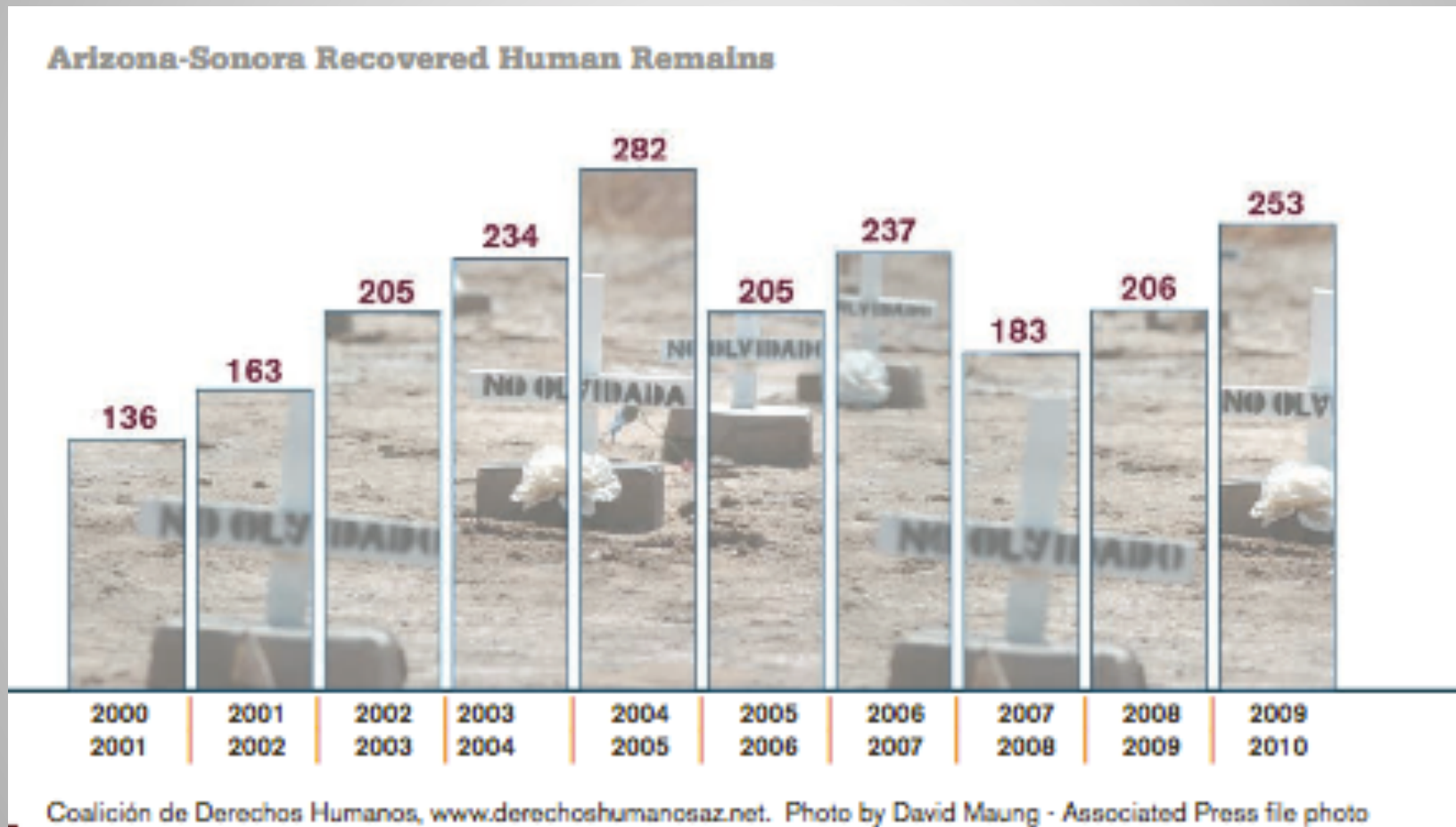
- Criminalization of immigration status and use of incarceration...
- Linking of immigration to politics of national security, reliance of policing tactics on racial, ethnic/nationality and religious profiling...

Scapegoating of immigrants for economic crisis, pushing anti-immigrant laws to rollback access, rights and protections...



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# More militarization of border communities, funneling of migrants ...



Numerous enforcement programs lead to increased detentions and deportations – now at record levels.



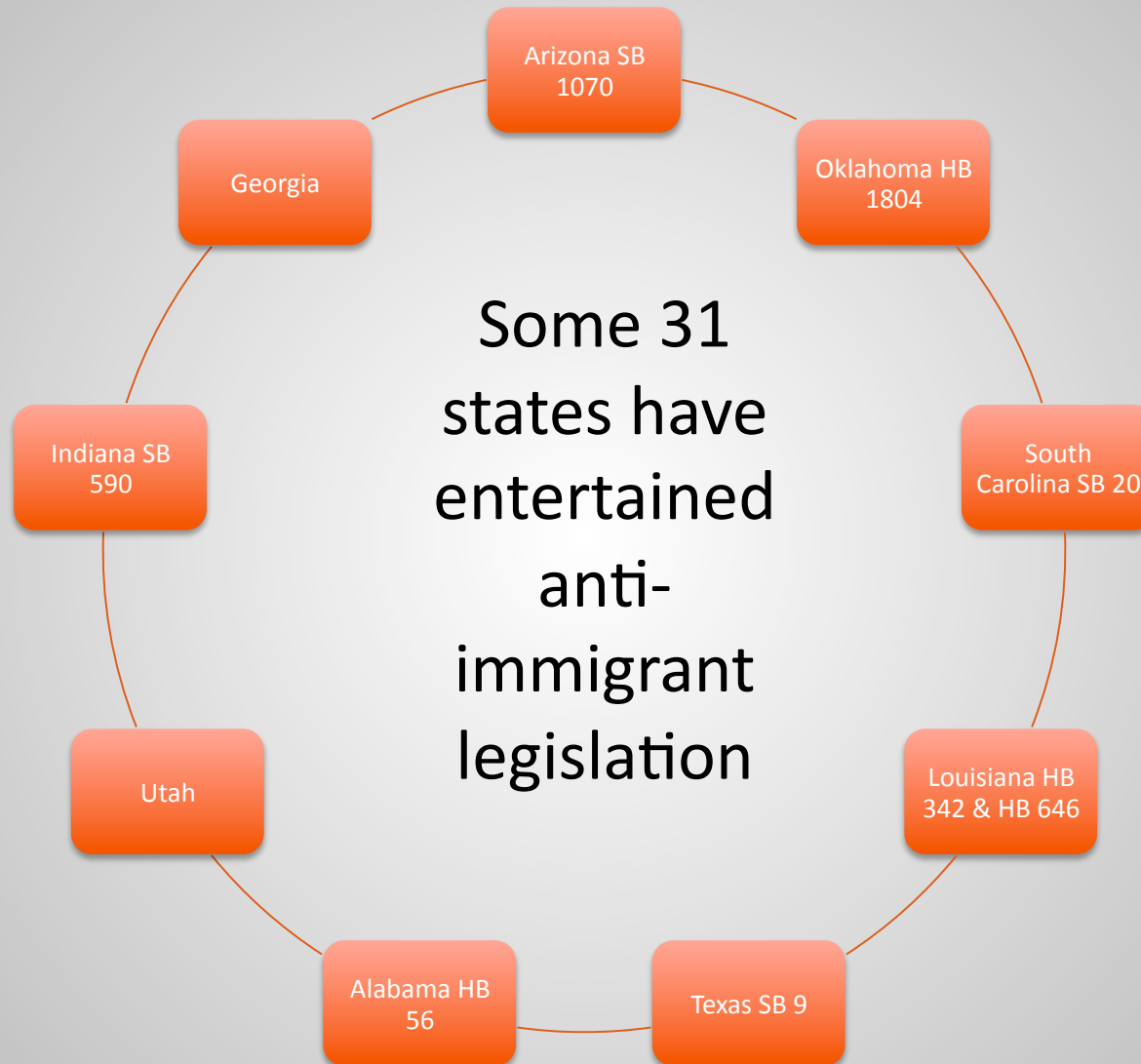


# State anti-immigrant bills



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Some 31  
states have  
entertained  
anti-  
immigrant  
legislation



- ALEC – American Legislative Exchange Council – corporate-funded, played role in drafting state bills like AZ SB 1070, energized by groups like FAIR...
- Even if ruled unconstitutional, many state laws have already done damage:
  - *Focus on immigrants as “criminals”*
  - *Scapegoating for state employment, education, health care woes*
  - *Drive up hostilities, distrust and violence against immigrants*
- Supreme Court ruling expected in June on AZ bill





## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Immigrant Day in California

Hundreds of immigrant community members and advocates gathered at the state capitol in Sacramento in May to urge legislators to support key reforms.



# California legislative priorities

- Domestic Workers Bill of Rights
- TRUST Act
- Workplace Religious Freedom Act
- Reuniting Immigrant Families
- Protecting New Health Care Enrollees from Fraud and Deceptive Marketing
- Reject Governor's CalWORKS Proposal

# The 2012 Presidential Elections and Immigration

- Will immigration be a “hot button” issue?
- Will we hear political candidates from both the Republican and Democratic parties bragging about how “tough” they are on immigration?

# Shift the narrative - Change the conversation on immigration

- **Fight the negative frames** – criminalization/demonization of immigrants, scapegoating, threat to national security, including at the border
- **Uplift human rights messages** and the common social and economic agenda – jobs, education, health care, women's rights, LGBT rights, children/youth
- **Promote a vision** of immigration and immigrant communities as members and contributors to our society

# Raise awareness of key problems and solutions

- Break the public consensus supporting the detention and deportation of immigrant men, women and children
  - Separates families
  - Threat of deportation undermines labor rights
  - Effectively prohibits future immigration opportunities



# Undermine support for border militarization

- Raise awareness of the **human rights crisis** at the border
- Share the effects of militarization on border communities, the environment, migrants
- Engage (long-term) in the discussion on the drug trade and US drug policy

# Shape the call for fair and just immigration reforms

- Provide for the adjustment of immigration status, including real legalization
- Expand legal immigration and access to visas (green cards) + work authorization
- Suspend E-Verify (poised as a 'trade off' for legalization)
- Suspend detentions and deportations, stop family separations
- Increase resources for regular immigration processes, end the backlog

# Global Migration: *Global Human Rights*



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## *Recognizing the human rights of ALL migrants...*

- On December 18, 1990, after years of debate and negotiation, the UN General Assembly approved the ***International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.***
- It was brought “into force” in 2003 after a minimum of 23 countries ratified or approved it.
- To date, 45 countries have ratified the convention.

# Why is the Migrant Workers Convention Important?

- Recognizes that ALL migrants, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, have rights.
- Acknowledges migrants as social beings, often with families.
- Addresses need for housing, education, health care, decent employment.
- Promotes the notion of “standards” by which we measure our national laws.

## The global context of migration helps to inform our work for immigrant rights and justice...

- Recognition and respect for the human rights of all migrants
- Advocacy for global policies towards sustainable development and job creation...
- Migration should be a choice and not an act of desperation and survival

# Women and Global Migration Working Group – Istanbul, April 2012

The latest global advocacy group to form focuses on the issues and needs of migrant women



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Migrant women's group participates in march of some 3000 women through the streets of Istanbul.



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# Upcoming International Events on Migration...

## 2012...

June:

- UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants reports to Human Rights Council in Geneva on detention of migrants

November:

- Global Forum on Migration and Development in Mauritius
- World Social Forum on Migration in Manila

## Fall 2013...

- UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in New York City