

LANGUAGE FOR LIBERATION:

*A Playbook for Inclusive
Immigration Messaging*



COMM/UNITY



SUMMARY (TLDR): TOP RECOMMENDATIONS BY ISSUE

1-MINUTE MESSAGES

Repealing 1325/1326

- Let's uphold our values of compassion and common humanity. It's time to get rid of cruel laws that drive mass incarceration and immoral profits.
- A law authored by a white supremacist legislator in the 1920's has fueled mass incarceration under recent administrations of both parties. It allows people who cross the border to be locked up in federal prison, sometimes for years.
- This is an extra punishment on top of unjust detention and deportation via the immigration system.
- We need to end federal prison sentences for people who cross the border seeking safety, freedom, opportunity, or trying to come home.

Strong sanctuary policies | 1-minute message

Track one: Racial justice

- Immigrants are a vital part of our communities but face hate-filled attacks from the Trump admin.
- The admin. wants our local governments to be complicit in deporting millions of people, filling the coffers of private prison corporations in the process.

- We should not be a cog in this unjust machine. Pass the (Sanctuary Ordinance) today to protect community members from federal abuses of power and racial profiling.
- This ordinance will honor our values - and move us toward our vision of a better world

Track two: Safety and resources

- We all want to build a better future for our children and our communities, no matter what we look like or where we were born
- But the federal government wants to our local police and Sheriff to do the job of federal deportation agents. This will make us less safe and lead to abuses.
- Pass this ordinance today. It will keep families together and ensure equal justice for all residents.

Fighting gang carve-outs in legislation

- Immigrants are a vital part of our families and communities. We need legislation that honors our values of due process and moves us forward—not backward.
- We shouldn't write discrimination and racial profiling into our laws.
- This proposal would further target and profile young people of color. Trump and anti-immigrant politicians want to rig the rules for the wealthy and spread fear about immigrants to divide and distract us.

Humanizing people with past convictions

- To build true community safety for all of us, we need to move away from the failed harsh policies of the past and honor our values of transformation and healing.
- We need to look at the individual circumstances of each person's life, and uplift the power of people changing their lives and contributing to making the community better.
- ____ is a leader in the community, and their story of transformation is an inspiration to us all. Deporting ____ would devastate their family and community. #FreeMyHero

Why people with convictions shouldn't be deported/ICE out of state prisons

- We need policies that honor our values of transformation and healing. But the criminal legal system is an arm of racism, which has led to the mass incarceration of people of color in the U.S.
- Many people in prison are survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Prisons perpetuate cycles of violence on survivors.
- No one should be marked by their worst mistake. It's inhumane to deport people to countries they have little ties to, or where they will face additional harm.
- Like all people, an immigrant who completes a sentence in prison should be able to restart their life with their communities and families

ICE raids allegedly targeting people with serious records

- Immigrants are a vital part of our families and communities. All of us, no matter our color or background, have a stake in building a better future.
- ICE raids break families apart and spread fear and pain. ICE has a long track record of misleading the public. Its operations are defined by abuses of power, racial profiling, and mistreatment.
- We need to protect due process for everyone - no matter what they look like, what their background is, or what the Trump administration accuses them of.

OVERVIEW OF DO'S AND DON'TS AS WE CHALLENGE THE CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Please do

- **Lift up shared values, emphasize common humanity**, and highlight our vision for a better world
- **Assign responsibility to big picture villains** at the intersection of racial and economic injustice, such as politicians who divide communities so that private prison corporations can benefit, white supremacists, agencies abusing their power/ racially profiling.
- Make the connection between mass incarceration and mass deportation explicit.
- **Use language such as “like everyone, immigrants...”** or **“everyone, including immigrants...”** to emphasize shared interests

- Lift up systemic problems (such as obstacles to equal justice, racial profiling, lack of due process) and the individual circumstances of people’s lives (such as surviving abuse, fleeing war, etc).

Let’s move away from

- **Dehumanizing language criminals, felons, etc.** This includes saying “we are not criminals, etc”
 - These words are rooted in racism and anti-blackness, and allow communities to be divided into simplistic categories of ‘good’ and ‘bad.’ The opposition will always move the goal posts so that most people end up in the ‘bad’ category.
- Assuming that more punishment, more arrests, and more jails make us safe, as long as they are targeted at “bad people.”
 - This will feed right-wing narratives that will only lead to more abusive policies - and contradicts trends in criminal justice reform.

TERMS & PHRASES TO RECONSIDER

CURRENT LANGUAGE	CONSIDER REPLACING WITH
Criminals, offenders	People, people with convictions
Illegal entry	People (in detention, in jail, who’ve been incarcerated)
Illegal reentry	People coming home after unfair deportation
Protect people with low-level convictions but deport serious criminals	Protect due process for everyone, no matter what they look like or where they were born.
Prioritize enforcement so ICE can focus on serious offenders.	We need to protect due process for everyone, no matter what they look like or what their background is.
Sanctuary isn’t “get out of jail free.” Immigrants will still be prosecuted.	Sanctuary policies protect equal justice under the law and help uphold due process protections for everyone.
“Crawling” or “infested” with gangs	Affected by gang violence
Let police/ICE go after the worst of the worst.	If ICE is entangled with police, that further undercuts community confidence. We need to protect everyone who calls our community home from ICE’s abuses.

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