



# The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Office  
of the  
Bishop

### A Statement on the Deportation of Betty Rendón

“The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” —Leviticus 19:34

In 2004 Betty Rendón and her family fled Colombia's civil war. Guerrilla rebels had threatened to kill Rendón because she would not allow them to recruit students at a school where she served as principal. Betty and her family fled to the United States with tourist visas and applied for asylum. Their applications were denied in 2009. Like many people in the world fleeing violence, they chose to stay rather than risk returning.

Betty was scheduled to begin her doctoral studies next month at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, but this morning she and her husband, Carlos Hincapie, were put on a plane and deported back to Colombia. Their daughter (a DACA recipient) and granddaughter (born in the US) were not allowed to visit them to say goodbye.

Because of her DACA status, their daughter, Paula Hincapie-Rendon is not subject to deportation. It also means, however, that she is not allowed to leave this country; she will now be permanently separated from her parents.

This is our immigration policy at its very worst: separating families, denying asylum to those seeking refuge from violence, and deporting contributing members of our communities with spotless criminal records. What have we become?

In 2017 the President stopped all DACA applications. Several current DACA recipients have been detained.

The U.S. is a country of immigrants, and the Lutheran Church is an immigrant church.

- We call upon our nation's leaders to protect migrants, refugees, and those fleeing violence.
- We call upon our government to stop separating families.
- We call upon the administration to assume the United States' proper share of international responsibility for the resettlement of refugees and other persons urgently in need of the compassionate haven of a new home land.
- We oppose practices that create unreasonable obstacles and unattainable standards of proof for those seeking asylum.

We pray for Betty, Carlos, Paula, and all who flee violence and persecution for a better life here. We pray that our nation may be a place of welcome for the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Dear Lord, send us the homeless and tempest-tossed, and give us a heart to lift our lamp, like Lady Liberty, beside the golden door.

Bishop Michael Rinehart  
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“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” —Jesus, Matthew 25:35

“How do we know that the love of God dwells in us? If we take upon ourselves the need of the neighbor.” —  
Martin Luther