

John Gurule, Acting Field Officer Director
Enforcement and Removal Operations
Phoenix Field Office
2035 N. Central Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85004



August 28, 2014

Dear Mr. Gurule,

Today, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Phoenix stands in solidarity with University Presbyterian Church in Tempe, AZ as they welcome Luis Lopez-Acabal into Sanctuary.

Leviticus 19:33-34 states; *“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.”*

Luis Lopez Acabal fled to the United States from Guatemala as an unaccompanied minor at the age of 16 to escape gang violence and has been in the United States for seven years. He is married to Maria Canales who is a legal permanent resident. Mr. Lopez has taken in his wife’s two US citizen children for many years and both of the children consider him their father. Mr. Lopez is the sole breadwinner in the family. Maria needs to stay at home and act as full time caregiver for their autistic son.

Luis has been in deportation proceedings as a result of a minor traffic accident. On July 7, 2014, a request for stay of removal was submitted but the request has been denied. Luis now lives under the threat of immediate deportation and separation from his wife and children. Clearly a hardship for the entire family.

We are called as a faith community to stand against injustice and ask and pray that your office will exercise the discretion you have available to keep Luis with his two children and loving wife. The family is a sacred institution that is being violated by the tragic separation of families throughout the country, due to misguided immigration policies.

We ask that you act swiftly and compassionately to stop Mr. Luis Lopez-Acabal from being deported.

Sincerely,

Rev. James Pennington, Senior Pastor, and the Members of First Congregational UCC, Phoenix.

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