“Their Fight Is Our Fight:”
Immigration Justice and the Wyoming GSA Network

Wyoming GSA Network
A Project of Wyoming Equality
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INTRODUCTION

At the Wyoming GSA Network, we recognize that not every undocumented person is straight or cisgender. We know that not every lesbian, bisexual, gay, two-spirit, transgender, or queer member of our community is a documented citizen. Therefore, we insist that the fight for immigration justice is our fight, and that any harm caused to the undocumented community is harm done to our community as well. We have created this guide as a tool to better understand how to discuss issues of immigration justice using the most respectful language. This is by no means comprehensive and should be viewed as a starter kit. Included in this kit are links to resources where you can learn more about immigration justice.

TERMINOLOGY

Phrases to Avoid

Illegal/Illegal Alien: This phrase should be avoided whenever possible, because it dehumanizes the person or people in question. “Illegal” portrays the person as a criminal, while alien conjures up images of a Martian or UFO, instead of a human being who is a classmate, neighbor, or co-worker. Instead, use the phrase undocumented immigrant (below).

Phrases to Know and Use

Citizenship: If you were born in the United States or any of its territories, you were automatically granted U.S. citizenship at birth, regardless of the documentation status of your parents or legal guardians.

Green card: A permit that allows for permanent residence in the United States.

I.C.E.: The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a federal agency created in 2003 that enforces immigration law by preventing undocumented immigrants from entering the country and by forcing undocumented immigrants to leave the country.

Latinx (Lah-TEEN-ex): A person of Latin American heritage.

Mixed-status family: A family whose members have different immigration statuses. For example, one or more persons may be citizens, while one or more others may be undocumented immigrants.

Naturalization: The process through which someone who is not a citizen of the United States becomes a citizen.

Noncitizen: Any person who is currently in the United States but is not a citizen. Noncitizens may or may not have documentation.

Removal: The process by which ICE forces an undocumented person to leave the country.

Undocumented Immigrant: An undocumented immigrant is just that: a person who has come to this country without documentation, such as a visa or green card. Undocumented immigrants are members of our community just like everyone else, but they risk forced detainment or removal.
by the United States government through an agency known as ICE, or Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Visa: A visa is a document given to a noncitizen that enables them to enter a country. Nonimmigration visas are for shorter stays, while immigration visas are for people who plan to stay in the United States.

**IMMIGRATION JUSTICE IN THE EQUALITY STATE**

Right now, undocumented communities across Wyoming are facing an increase in removal due to a spike in ICE activity.¹ Also concerning to undocumented people and people in mixed status families is the unresolved debate over DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protected nearly 800,000 young people from deportation.² While Congress has until March of 2018 to extend DACA, many recipients are currently in limbo, and some estimates suggest than upwards of 100 DACA recipients have been losing their work authorization daily.³

Undocumented people and their families face a unique threat in Wyoming, as a private corporation is currently attempting to build a for-profit immigration prison in Uinta County. The company in question is Management and Training Corporation, or MTC. MTC has a documented history of human rights abuses, especially with regard to an immigration prison run by MTC in Raymondville, Texas. Inmates and staff alike complained of inhumane treatment at the Texas prison, with complaints of maggots in food, mold, unhygienic underwear, backed up toilets, and insect and rodent infestations. The Raymondville prison actually shut its doors after a riot occurred in protest against the inhumane conditions.⁴

MTC is no stranger to controversy in Wyoming, either. The company is currently being sued in the U.S. District Court for Wyoming over allegations of discrimination against Native Americans.

Because of the multiple reports of misconduct, and a desire to keep families united, multiple groups from across the state of Wyoming have come together to form the #WyoSayNo campaign, whose goal is to stop the construction of the proposed MTC immigration prison in

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Uinta County. The #WyoSayNo campaign has already met with several state legislators and the Governor of Wyoming, Matt Mead, to ask them to publicly denounce the planned prison.

In January, the board of Wyoming Equality unanimously voted to officially become a member of the #WyoSayNo coalition. The Wyoming GSA Network, as a project of Wyoming Equality, is proud to educate and activate GSA students and their peers across the Equality State to join the campaign. This resource is one avenue of education for GSA students.

OTHER RESOURCES

Local and Regional Resources


Immigration Justice Coalition of Laramie County Group of Laramie County residents concerned with immigration justice. [https://www.facebook.com/WYOIRC/](https://www.facebook.com/WYOIRC/)

Juntos Education and advocacy group for Wyoming immigration communities. [https://juntoswyoming.wordpress.com/](https://juntoswyoming.wordpress.com/)

WyoSayNo Campaign to stop a corporation with a documented history of human rights abuses from building a for-profit prison for our classmates, neighbors, and community members who are undocumented. [https://wyosayno.com/](https://wyosayno.com/)

National and International Resources

Basic Rights of All Students Simple factsheet on rights of all students with regards to education, ICE, and deportation. [http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fl_im_yourrightsfactsheet_020817.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/fl_im_yourrightsfactsheet_020817.pdf)


**Immigrant Legal Resource Center** Organization that offers education to immigrants and community groups regarding the legal rights of immigrants. [https://www.ilrc.org/](https://www.ilrc.org/)

**Model Campus Safe Zone Resolution Language** Resource to help K-12 school districts draft resolutions that will better protect immigrant students. [https://www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-enforcement/campus-safe-zones-language-k-12/](https://www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-enforcement/campus-safe-zones-language-k-12/)

**Transgender Immigrants** Resource guide from Lambda Legal for immigrants who are transgender. [https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-immigrants-resources](https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-immigrants-resources)

**Other Resources**

**Comprehensive List of Resources** List of resources with subcategories, such as Mental Health, and Information for Educators and Schools. [https://www.informedimmigrant.com/resources/#](https://www.informedimmigrant.com/resources/#)

For more resources go to: [http://www.wygsanetwork.org/](http://www.wygsanetwork.org/)