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Dear Texas Legislators,

As faith leaders in Texas, we are deeply concerned about proposed legislation that threatens the well-being of children and youth in our state. We urge you to defend every child's right to access quality public education, regardless of their immigration status, nationality, or place of birth. Our faith calls us to honor the inherent worth of every child created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Scripture reminds us that we serve God by welcoming the stranger and caring for those in need, and that our treatment of "the least of these" reflects our treatment of Christ himself (Matthew 25:31-45). Children hold a special place in God's heart and are central to His vision for the world (Isaiah 11:6; Matthew 18:3-4, 19:14). Jesus taught that welcoming a child is akin to welcoming Him (Matthew 18:5). Our faith compels us to advocate for children and youth and that means standing against policies that could cause severe, long-term harm to their lives and futures.

We believe HB 371 represents one such harmful policy. This bill would deny more than 100,000 Texas children access to free public education simply because of their undocumented status. Preventing these children from enrolling in school free of charge—except in the unlikely event that the federal government agrees to pay for their education costs—and withholding state funds from school districts to educate them is both unjust and morally indefensible. Children bear no responsibility for their immigration status, which is entirely beyond their control. Yet, denying them a K-12 education would impose lifelong hardships. Without access to education, these children face significant barriers to supporting themselves and their future families, contributing meaningfully to their communities, and achieving intellectual, social, and emotional well-being. Such a policy does not just harm individual children—it weakens the fabric of our society and compromises our shared future.

We are also deeply concerned about HB 160, HB 232, HB 424, HB 979, and HB 1324. These bills would unfairly deny undocumented youth—many of whom have grown up in Texas—the opportunity to pursue higher education by subjecting them to nonresident tuition rates. Charging these students up to four times the tuition paid by their peers places higher education out of reach for many, effectively barring them from achieving their dreams, gaining financial security, and contributing their talents to our communities and the world.

HB 160 would also subject undocumented students to harsh and unjust treatment by potentially requiring them to retroactively pay nonresident tuition for academic terms they have already completed. Even more troubling, the bill would mandate that colleges and universities report students to law enforcement if their presence in the United States is found to be unauthorized under federal law. This mandatory reporting policy would foster fear, confusion, and a hostile environment, discouraging immigrant youth, regardless of their status, from pursuing higher education and reaching their full potential.

Every young person deserves to grow up in communities that welcome them with dignity, hope, and joy. As people of faith, we are called to uphold a shared moral responsibility to care for the children and youth among us, ensuring their safe passage to adulthood—regardless of where they were born or their immigration status. Every child deserves love, protection, and opportunity, and we must advocate for their well-being.

As Christians, faith leaders, constituents, and fellow Texans committed to the well-being of every person in our state, we call upon you to oppose House Bills 371, 160, 232, 424, 979, 1324, and any other proposed legislation or amendments that would restrict or deny access to public education for children or youth based on immigration status. As leaders of this great state, we urge you to seek justice, act with mercy, and lead boldly with love and compassion for all Texas children, youth, and their families.

In His peace,

[signatures]