

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2nd Annual Immigrant and Refugee Rights Advocacy Day in Kentucky**

FRANKFORT, KY – Immigrants, refugees, and advocates from across the Commonwealth will be at the Capitol tomorrow, February 26th, for Kentucky's second annual Immigrant and Refugee Rights Advocacy Day. Educators, community leaders and advocates will join legislators for a press conference at 1:00 pm in the Capitol Rotunda.

The purpose of the day is to bring advocates for immigrants' rights face-to-face with legislators. Participants will wear stickers featuring the phrase "Love Thy Neighbor: Support Immigrant and Refugee Rights," and deliver messages to legislators on postcards featuring photographs of Kentucky's diverse population. Areas of emphasis will include student achievement, language access, and keeping communities safe.

Cori Hash, co-organizer and attorney with the Kentucky Equal Justice Center, believes that "Kentucky's Immigrant & Refugee Rights Advocacy Day is a great opportunity for Kentuckians to speak with legislators one-on-one and to be a part of the democratic process. Our laws should promote, not discourage, full integration into the Commonwealth."

Participants will gather at 9:00 a.m. to begin the day with a group training session on how to meet with legislators. Following the 1:00 p.m. press conference, participants will assemble on the steps up to the House and Senate chambers at 1:45 p.m. as legislators go into session to remind them of the vital role that immigrants and refugees have played and continue to play in Kentucky.

"The success of our state depends upon public policies that provide bright futures for all Kentucky children, regardless of their or their parents' country of birth," says Jenessa Bryan, co-organizer and a policy analyst for Kentucky Youth Advocates. "Kentucky's immigrant child population is small, but growing. The majority of children in immigrant families, 68 percent, are U.S.-born citizens. If we can promote solutions that increase integration and responsibility, we can make the Commonwealth a safe and healthy state to grow up in for all children."

Immigrants and refugees are a vital part of Kentucky, contributing to the diversity, cultural landscape, and the economic well-being of the state. "This day is about residents of Kentucky taking part in the civic process, while showing support for the diverse immigrant and refugee communities that make Kentucky strong," says Aaron Hutson, co-organizer and Program Coordinator for the Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

The 2008 Immigrants and Refugee Rights Advocacy Day is supported by an alliance of immigrant and refugee rights' groups, including: Al Dia en America, The Georgetown / Scott County Hispanic Initiative, Hispanic-Latino Coalition of Louisville, Hoy en las Americas newspaper, Kentucky American Civil Liberties Union, Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Kentucky Equal Justice Center, Kentucky Jobs with Justice, Kentucky Youth Advocates, La Caliente Radio, La Voz de Kentucky newspaper, and Radio Vida.