



*Welcoming  
Massachusetts*

PRESS RELEASE  
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#### Contacts

Shuya Ohno, MIRA, 617-821-8990  
Damaris Lopez, Agencia Alpha, 617-962-3417  
Brooke Mead, Berkshire Immigrant Center,  
413-445-4881

## ***Welcoming Massachusetts Celebrates Week of Action***

The Welcoming Massachusetts campaign celebrates reaching five thousand individual endorsements with a week of action (through Oct 21st) with over 30 events happening all across the Commonwealth.

The full schedule can be found at: [www.welcomingma.org/](http://www.welcomingma.org/)

Communities are joining Welcoming MA to affirm and celebrate the Commonwealth's shared tradition of welcoming and respecting the dignity of all people. Events this week included film screenings at the Arlington St Church, participation in the Columbus Day Parade in East Boston, and a forum in Somerville, MA. There will be a vigil in Cambridge, a community discussion in Chelsea, and a music and dance performance in Pittsfield. Cities and towns holding events will also include Fitchburg, Brockton, Arlington, and Littleton.

"We're doing these events because we believe that it's time to raise awareness of issues that are affecting the immigrant community and every community," stated Damaris Lopez of Agencia Alpha. "We also believe that it's time to ask people to join us to understand the human side of these issues because we need to discuss on what families are really going through."

"My faith community realizes that it's okay to challenge and change the system to support of human needs. Challenging or changing a system or an unjust set of laws is moral. It is the right thing to do from the perspective of our faith traditions. One has to live up to one's beliefs and faith, with not only words, but also with one's actions."

Mayor James Ruberto of Pittsfield stated, "It was clear a hundred years ago, when all of our grandparents came to Pittsfield from other parts of the world, that they wanted to try to make a life."

"Today we see a replay of that ... and we need to see the creation of an incredible environment where immigrants can not only bring in their culture, but their desire to improve their lives and the lives of their children," the mayor said.

Brooke Mead of the Berkshire Immigrant Center stated, "The Berkshire Immigrant Center is proud to be part of a campaign that expresses a commitment to our immigrant community and shows respect to peoples from all backgrounds." "Immigrants have always been an important part of Berkshire County and the Commonwealth. They enrich our community in so many ways and provide hope for our future. The Welcoming MA campaign honors and values the contributions of our immigrant neighbors and is positively raising the level of public discourse concerning immigrants and immigration."

Lenira Peters of Womens Place Crisis Center in Brockton stated, "Across our Commonwealth, in our neighborhoods, too many are made to feel unwelcomed and made to feel different. I think it is important for all of us to welcome immigrants because it really affects our whole community."

"For example," Peters continued, "I work with women who are immigrants and survivors of domestic violence. Too often are made to feel all alone, with no one to listen to them, with no one to help. This makes it harder for them to leave an abusive situation. If women felt more welcomed, it might be easier for them to get the help they need. Everyone should feel safe, and should know that they are part of a neighborhood, and a valuable part of their community."

Vicky Steinitz of Cambridge United for Justice with Peace stated, "We have been fighting for immigrant rights since we began in 2002. We are gathering signatures to the Welcoming MA pledge at our weekly vigils. During the week of action, we are holding a candlelight vigil to demonstrate our solidarity with detained and deported immigrants, as well as our commitment to making our city and state a community which values every one living here."

For more information visit: [www.welcomingma.org/](http://www.welcomingma.org/)

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Welcoming Massachusetts:

Affirming Massachusetts as a Commonwealth that respects the dignity of all people: "...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all [humans] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."