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## Texas Interfaith leaders take a stand against SB4

By [Leslie Rangel](#) Published: February 2, 2017, 7:07 pm

AUSTIN (KXAN) — As hundreds of people gathered to speak out against Senate Bill 4, a bill that looks to prohibit “sanctuary city” policies, interfaith leaders from across the state stood up to deliver their own message.

“This is not a political issue, this is a human issue,” Rev. Frederick Clarkson of Houston’s St. Timothy Episcopal Church said.

Frankly put, faith leaders say this bill would hurt the relationship between a vulnerable population that needs to trust and rely on law enforcement.

“SB 4 will force many immigrants, undocumented or otherwise, into the shadows out of fear of being unfairly targeted simply because of the color of their skin,” said Dr. Gus Reyes, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.



Among the items faith leaders cited would hurt the immigrant community were police-community relations, concerns about racial profiling and inhumane treatment of people.

“People will fear law enforcement officers and we always want to encourage folks to build bridges with law enforcement officers, to respect them, to obey them and not to run from them,” Reyes said.

["We would not have Jesus as our Lord and Savior, because he was undocumented" - faith leaders say against SB4 @KXAN\\_News. Feb. 2, 2017 Austin, Texas.](#)

Other faith leaders, like Father Bruce Nieli from St. Austin Catholic Church says the church's mission is to help those who are less fortunate.

"I came to Texas and work largely with the Mexicanos, the Mexican-American community, the people coming from El Salvador during the Salvadorian Civil War," Father Nieli said. "I would rather like us to come up with a "reforma migratoria," an immigration reform which respects our borders, respects our situation, or security issues, but also is open and welcoming."

Among other leaders who spoke were Bishop Joe Vasquez of the Diocese of Austin and chair of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration and Refugee Services. Bishop Vasquez also testified before lawmakers against SB4.

"The immigrants many times have no one to speak on their behalf," Bishop Vaquez says.