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## **FAITH LEADERS ASK SPECTER FOR IMMIGRATION LAW FIXES**

**Ervin Dyer**

**Leaders with the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network marched from the Hill District to U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter's Downtown offices yesterday, calling on the senator to have a heart when it comes to immigration reform.**

**They delivered about 300 letters asking the Republican senator to move the immigration hearings in a more comprehensive direction.**

**Faith leaders would like to see legislation that addresses the 11 million undocumented immigrants already living in the United States and creates a process whereby they can become legal, can stay and be reunited with families, and have the chance for employment visas.**

**Mr. Specter chairs the Judiciary Committee, which is scheduled to take up immigration reform early next month.**

**In December, the House passed an immigration measure that the local faith leaders described as too Draconian because it focuses mostly on deportation, border security and forcing businesses to check employees' immigration status.**

**From the viewpoint of the U.S. bishops, said John Hannigan, director of the office of community service for the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, the immigration system is broken. To repair it, laws are needed that don't deny human dignity to immigrants and unnecessarily separate families.**

**In some cases, said Mr. Hannigan, families have waited decades to be reunited.**

**"It's time," he said, "to fix a broken formula with a comprehensive and humane approach."**

**The faith leaders, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims, meet regularly with about 20 immigrants and community organizers at St. Benedict the Moor Church, Hill District. They consider comprehensive immigration reform "a pro-life issue."**

They also want the senator to meet with businessmen, labor leaders, clergy and immigrant advocate groups from across the state to get input on reforming the laws.

The Rev. Ron Wanless, a United Methodist minister, said the country should be careful about creating "laws of hatred."

In an e-mail yesterday, Mr. Specter said he is available to meet with any group or individuals who seek to provide their views on the issue.

The senator also released the following statement:

"We are preparing a bill to take up not only national security and border security, but also guest workers. ... This is a country of immigrants. It is something I feel very keenly about because both of my parents were immigrants."

Ervin Dyer can be reached at [edyer@post-gazette.com](mailto:edyer@post-gazette.com) or 412-263-1410.