



House Bill 1178: Does not reflect the hospitable community where we want to live

I am Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval. I am a co-founder of Soul 2 Soul – which is a Black women-led, faith-based, racial justice organization that engages Black people across religious traditions in healing and liberation work. We also work with white accomplices to advance actions towards dismantling racism and white supremacy. Soul 2 Soul works to embody and model a new way of regarding and honoring Black women and Black women’s leadership; to Soul 2 Soul, honoring Black women presupposes that we protect and honor all women, protect and honor every person’s human right to live in peace and dignity – caring for ourselves, our families, and our futures. Because this legislation is dripping with colonizer ethos – hateful treatment of beautiful, strong, courageous historically marginalized people – because this legislation is thick with xenophobia is why we oppose House Bill 1178.

1178. Which is sponsored by Representative Dave Williams, Senator Vicki Marble and Senator Kevin Lundberg. House Bill 1178 – we’ve seen legislation like this before that seeks to terrorize immigrant beloveds and criminalize public servants for behaving like loving humans. Bills that force local law-enforcement agents to investigate immigration status during routine policing procedures. Bills that punish elected officials with a felony for voting to protect residents who are not citizens. Undergirding such bills is a blatant disregard of the fact that we are all standing on sacred yet stolen ground from strong, beautiful, bold native peoples yet – nonsensically – descendants of immigrants have the audacity to try to legislate who is welcome here and who must go, who can stay and who must leave.

Coming to a new land seeking peace, love and our God-given gift of abundant life is a holy, soulful, intimate decision – a decision that results from deep reflection, deep discussion with God, the divine, universe, ancestors, self, with dear beloveds. Encouragement to honor immigrants’ sacred decisions is found in such sacred texts as Leviticus 19:34, which says, “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love [them] as yourself, for you were strangers in the land (:) ... I the Lord am your God.”

God/the divine/the universe requires us to do no wrong to the stranger, do no wrong to the nomad, do no wrong to our guests. We must treat all residents as citizens. We are to embody love, inclusion, hospitality, a spirit of journeying with. Knowing that we are all created in the image of the divine, we must RISE UP and heed the call to embrace all residents, offer compassion and support to families who made difficult decisions about coming to Colorado, seeking liberty and justice for all, seeking a peaceful life. After all, freedom to make decisions about our own lives is a basic human right. Living without being terrorized is a basic human right. Living in peace is a basic human right. It’s a basic human right. It’s a basic human right. Peace is an essential safeguard of our humanity. Peace is a safeguard of our dignity.

This is about compassion, peace, love and learning to trust and honor people of color. I strongly urge you to oppose House Bill 1178. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

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