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## Media Advisory

August 26, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Hundreds of Faith Leaders and Grassroots Community members Lead Interfaith Prayer Vigil to Honor Senator Kennedy's Legacy

*Calling on Public Officials to Live out the Legacy of Senator Edward Kennedy by supporting  
Health Care for All and Fair and Humane Immigration Reform*

**Who:** Alliance to Develop Power / ADP  
Reform Immigration FOR America Campaign  
Health Rights Organizing Project of the Center for Community Change  
List of supporting Houses of Worship and Faith leaders attached

**What:** Interfaith Prayer Vigil in Support of the Dignity of Immigrants and Health Care for All

**Where:** New Federal Building, 300 State Street, Springfield, MA

**When:** Thursday, August 27, 2009 6:00 – 7:00 pm

### Why:

Over 75 faith leaders will gather together with over 300 parishioners and grassroots members of the Alliance to Develop Power to stand in unity against the politics of hate and division. Leading prayers and holding candles, participants will pray together for the passage of Comprehensive Immigration Reform and Health Care for All. To honor Senator Kennedy's passing, the Prayer Vigil will now feature community members reading passages from Senator Kennedy reflecting on his commitment to social and economic justice.

This historic interfaith prayer service will include leaders from the Evangelical, Catholic, Baha' ai, Jewish, Baptist, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist and Quaker faiths, among others. Prayers will be led in Farsi, Russian, English and Spanish.

"Faith calls on us to stand together with our brothers and sisters – American born and immigrant – Black, brown, and white – to lift up the true meaning of love," said Dedra Lewis of the ADP who

worked tirelessly with Senator Kennedy on the successful expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program. "Senator Kennedy represents that love. He was a true hero."

"We're standing for what Senator Kennedy has always stood for – shared responsibility, shared prosperity and everyday Americans calling on Congress to do what's right," said Caroline Murray, Executive Director of the Alliance to Develop Power. "And we're honoring Senator Kennedy's legacy by calling for the changes and ideals he held most dear – including the expansion of health care and the full and fair inclusion of immigrants in our society."

"I am brought here today by the words of Jesus Christ," said Adrian Garcia of the ADP Worker Center and the faith group San Pedro de Betancourt. "He came `to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind . . .' (Lk 4:18-19) and he identified himself with the hungry, the homeless, the stranger, `the least of these' (cf. Mt. 25:45). Like Senator Kennedy, my faith calls me to take action in support of Fair and Humane Immigration Reform."

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*The ALLIANCE TO DEVELOP POWER / ADP is a membership-based community organization that addresses growing racial and economic disparities by ensuring low-income communities and communities of color are at the forefront of growing a just and sustainable economy. ADP has been successful at reclaiming social and economic power through cooperative economic development, resulting in the creation of business and capital holdings collectively valued at \$45 million. The ADP Community Economy includes 1,450 units of cooperatively owned and permanently affordable housing, community centers, worker-controlled businesses that pay family sustainable living wages, and food cooperatives that distribute 180,000 pounds of food annually. Immigrant and low wage members of the ADP Worker Center / Casa Obrera, have secured over \$500,000 in restitution from unscrupulous employers. These community-owned assets – controlled by grassroots leaders and guided by principles that balance the needs of the individual, the community, business, and the environment – contribute \$20 million / year in cash flow to the local economy as well as provide the financial anchor for ADP's community organizing work. The ADP works for just policy reform at the local, state and national levels and is on the steering committee of the National Campaign for Community Values and a member of the National Reform Immigration FOR America Now campaign and the Health Care for America Now campaign.*