

Speech to Dignity March  
April 9, 2006  
Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson, Mayor of Salt Lake City

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Remarks by Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson  
Mayor of Salt Lake City

Our nation has had pivotal moments, when we had crucial choices – choices that would lead us astray from our greatness and humanity – and choices that would re-confirm everything that makes this a great country – a country that values justice, freedom, and compassion toward others. This is one of those times.

Let us all join together and stand tall by saying, together: End the injustice. Stop the divisions. Be kinder and more compassionate for one another.

Let us all join our voices together and call out: Let’s work together for a better America!

In joining together, let us truly come together as brothers and sisters, as families, as communities. As Whites, as Native Americans, as Asians, as Latinos, as African-Americans, as Pacific Islanders, as Muslims, as Christians, as Jews, as Buddhists, as Agnostics, as Hindus, as people of all

races, of all ethnic origins, of all religions, of all sexual orientations, of all economic classes, of all ages – we can build a better nation – and a better world – by working together, by living together, by looking out for one another, and by having compassion and greater understanding for each other.

We are here as a community united in calling for reform of our nation's broken immigration system, and to demand that our country abolish the unjust practices and policies that have lured so many hard-working people here, only to force them, and their families, to live in fear, in the margins of our nation. We urge all of our brothers and sisters in the United States to foster our country's noble dream of an open, welcoming, compassionate society. Let us continue the great traditions sustained by so many before us who have understood our country's potential for greatness through the contributions of immigrants and their descendents.

Opening our hearts, and offering opportunities, to those who seek a better life here is not contrary to the interests of our nation; rather, it is central to our country's history, to our identity as Americans, and to the greatness of this country. We unite behind the words of Emma Lazarus, engraved on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free!" Those words should apply today

just as much as they did when they were written and posted with Lady Liberty.

And so we say together to our city, our state, and our entire nation:  
Let's work together for a better America!

We insist to those who fear immigrants and who would divide our country that immigrants do not weaken our nation. Rather, immigrants now, as always, help to make this country stronger. Our economy is stronger, our communities are stronger, our personal lives are enriched because of the tremendous diversity in our nation. It is a diversity of traditions, of cultures, of life-stories, and of talents that, woven together, make the fabric of our nation so beautifully textured. Indeed, our nation, and our Salt Lake City community, experiences strength through diversity.

The present hypocritical immigration system in the United States closes the opportunity for many people to take better jobs, out of fear of being arrested and deported. Through its policy of selective enforcement, our government encourages immigrants to come to this country, but all too often tears apart families who have built their lives here and contributed so much to our society. And so we say to those who feel threatened by immigrants in our city and across this nation: Let's work together for a better America!

We stand here not simply for ourselves, not simply for immigrants, but for all Americans, all of our brothers and sisters who live in the shadows, and those who have benefited so much from the hard work and good, true family values of the vast majority of immigrant workers.

I am honored to be with you today, at this magnificent event that will inspire our brothers and sisters throughout our state and across the country. To see so many people dedicated to the pursuit of justice makes me feel so proud to be a resident of Salt Lake City, and so privileged to be your mayor. Please join us this Wednesday, April 12, from 7-9 PM at the downtown library for a freedom forum on immigration policy. Together, through productive, respectful, compassionate dialogue, we can achieve workable policy solutions that will make our laws conform to our practices and make our practices conform to our laws—and that will end the scourge of fear and dehumanization resulting from our present immigration system.

Let us continue the tradition of this great country as the nation of opportunity and freedom – just as it was for my forbears. Let us transform our broken immigration system into a humane system that will work for the benefit of all. Let us end the divisive, disrespectful, bigoted, hateful rhetoric, and come together as a nation, united for the goal of an open, free,

compassionate society. And let us all say to our leaders, fellow citizens, and those who are here to work and make better lives for themselves and their families: Let's work together for a better America!