

PRESS RELEASE

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative, Integrated Refugee Immigrant Services, and the Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition Present: A Community Conversation: Immigration: Myths, Laws, Policies, and Reforms

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative (GMLKCI), Integrated Refugee Immigrant Services (IRIS), and the Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition (CIRC) invite you to a virtual Community Conversation on January 25, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom Webinar.

Jon Bauer will moderate and facilitate the Conversation. Mr. Bauer is a Clinical Professor of Law, the Richard D. Tulisano '69 Scholar in Human Rights, and the Director of the Asylum and Human Rights Clinic at UConn School of Law.

The following individuals will serve as panelists:

Chris George. Mr. George is the Executive Director of IRIS, a government and privately funded nonprofit helping refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, regain hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities.

Following college, Mr. George served as a Peace Corp volunteer in Oman and later worked in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, directing a legislative strengthening project with the Palestinian Parliament and later established an emergency assistance program for Palestinian nonprofit organizations. Mr. George also served with Human Rights Watch – Middle East, Save the Children in the West Bank and Gaza, and the American Friends Service Committee. Mr. George spent most of his professional life in the Middle East.

Mr. George will address the following issues: reform of the refugee quota system; the social adjustment and the legal, employment, educational, law enforcement, and economic issues faced by refugees. Mr. George will also address whether refugees are a threat to our national or individual security; disproportionately engage in criminal activities, are unemployed or uneducated; or are a burden on taxpayers. Mr. George will also explain the vetting process and the success IRIS has had over the past few years in settling refugees in Connecticut.

Dana Bucin: Ms. Bucin received a B.A. from Ohio Wesleyan University and a J.D. from Boston University. Ms. Bucin is an Immigration attorney with the Murtha Cullina law firm representing both business and individual clients with green card applications, H-1B visas, foreign investor visas, naturalization / citizenship, religious worker visas, as well as various other employment and family-based immigration matters.

Ms. Bucin has been the recipient of many awards including a "40 Under Forty" award from the Hartford Business Journal and CT Magazine. The CT Law Tribune named her as a 2010 Women in the Law High Achievers; selected her as one of the "New Leaders in the Law;" and named her "Attorney of the Year." In addition, Ms. Bucin was named a Rising Star by the SuperLawyers Magazine.

Ms. Bucin will provide an overview of Federal immigration laws and policies during the Trump administration, anticipated and actual changes in the law and policies under the Biden administration, and recommended reforms.

Alan Dornan: Mr. Dornan is an 81-year-old activist who has been demonstrating with a sign advocating for DREAMers and all immigrants for 90 minutes each day in his Wethersfield

community since January 25, 2018. He has organized and participated in many rallies in his neighborhood and across the State. In June 2019, Mr. Dornan joined two other 80-year-old men in blocking the entrance to the Federal Courthouse in Hartford as an act of civil disobedience, protesting the inhumane treatment of refugee children at the southern border. They were arrested by Federal agents and fined. He declined to pay the fine and his case remains pending in Federal Court, delayed by COVID-19.

Mr. Dornan is a Board Member of CIRC and United Action Connecticut, and a member of the Greater Hartford Immigration Coalition, where he assists immigrants in preparing their asylum applications, identifying affordable immigration attorneys, and accompanying the applicants to ICE Court. In addition, Mr. Dornan is involved in raising funds to assist immigrants suffering from COVID-19 related food deprivation, homelessness, and lack of adequate healthcare.

Mr. Dornan will talk about his life as an activist and will address the role and importance of community activism in standing up for the rights of vulnerable immigrants and advocating for immigration reform.

Demetrios Giannaros: Dr. Giannaros immigrated from Greece at the age of 14 with his family. He earned a BA degree in Economics from the University of Massachusetts, MA degrees in Development Economics and Political Economy, and a PhD in Economics from Boston University. Dr. Giannaros retired after 36 years of teaching Economics, Public Policy, Public Finance, International Business, Economic Forecasting and Global Financial Markets to graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Hartford, Suffolk University, and Boston University. In addition, Dr. Giannaros served in the CT House of Representatives for 16 years, including as the Deputy Speaker. He also served as president of the National Immigrant Heritage Center, the Greenbriar Foundation, and the World Hellenic Inter-parliamentary Association. Currently, Dr. Giannaros is the President of the National Immigrant Heritage Center, Vice President, of CIRC, and a Trustee of the Polish-American Foundation.

Dr. Giannaros will speak about the contributions immigrants and refugees make to our society based upon a strictly economic analysis and perspective.

Host: GMLKCI is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, formed in 2001, under the auspices of the Glastonbury Human Relations Commission. GMLKCI's mission is to increase knowledge about, and understanding of, the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to provide leadership and active engagement to build an inclusive community. We believe that bringing people together discuss openly and honestly social justice issues will help build a more inclusive and tolerant community. As Dr. King noted "...whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly..." and "...the quality of a community is determined by how members of the community relate to one another;"

Host: Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, strengthen hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. Welcoming persecuted people from other countries is America's most noble tradition. IRIS helps newcomers on the road to self-sufficiency by providing lifesaving support during their transition to life in the United States.

Host: Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition is a broad-based network of community organizations, religious and business groups, and legal service providers committed to protecting the rights of and economic development of refugee and immigrant communities in CT and to foster their civic participation. CIRC has been advocating for immigrant and refugee communities in Connecticut since 1996.

The goal of this Community Conversation is for our panelists to provide both a starting point and a resource for what we hope will be an inspiring, lively, informative, thought-provoking, and life changing conversation.

This is a free event open to all. For additional information, please contact Leslie Ohta at 202-538-1161 or at leslieohta@gmail.com.

This will be a virtual conversation utilizing Zoom Webinar. You do not need a Zoom account in order to join this Conversation. There is no cost to join. You can join this, Community Conversation from your phone, desktop, mobile or tablet devices. There will be a chat room function which will allow you to pose general questions and questions to individual panelists.

To register, please log onto the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative web page and click on "Register."