More than 100 U.S. organizations are part of the Caravan effort. In addition to NAACP and NALACC, (Washington, DC) - On Sunday, August 12, the NAACP will join Mexican poet Javier Sicilia and a broad international coalition of grassroots and civil rights organizations to embark on the "Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity" across the United States. The caravan will focuses on repealing the misguided war on drugs and the associated policies.

"The NAACP has joined this coalition to call for an end to ineffective criminal justice policies like the war on drugs and racial profiling that fail to address the real problems of our communities," stated NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous. "We must abandon the unsuccessful "tough on crime" approach to justice and adopt a "smart on crime" strategy that places individuals, their welfare and dignity, and community safety at the center of drug policy."

Created by Mexican poet Javier Sicilia, family members of Mexican victims of the drug war will unite with victims and supporters from the United States for a month-long voyage across the continental United States. The goal of the Caravan for Peace is to engage in citizen diplomacy to stop the war on drugs and replace it with meaningful policies that do not disproportionately impact communities of color.

"This movement brings together activists from both of our countries to shed light on the policies that have failed our families, neighbors, and nations," stated Javier Sicilia. "United, we will raise our voices to call for an end to a war on drugs that allows entire communities to become casualties and we will demand a shift in attention to poverty and the lack of economic opportunity that helps breed the criminality."

Beginning in San Diego, CA, the Caravan for Peace will travel over 6,000 miles through more than 20 cities and communities in ten states-including Los Angeles, Santa Fe, El Paso, Houston, Montgomery, New Orleans, Chicago and New York-before arriving in Washington, D.C., on September 10. The Caravan will officially conclude on September 12 by calling for an International Day of Action for Peace in Mexico.

"From mass incarceration to violence in our communities to racial profiling, cities across this country are dealing with the fallout of the ill-conceived war on drugs," stated Dr. Niaz Kasravi, Director of the NAACP Criminal Justice Department. "The NAACP members from each city on the Caravan will stand with our partners to shed light on these flawed drug policies that have destroyed lives on both sides of the border."

At the 102nd NAACP Annual Convention in Los Angeles, CA the NAACP passed a historic resolution calling for an end to the war on drugs. In the over forty years since the war on drugs has existed, it has failed to decrease illegal drug addiction or violence in our communities, and drug policies have been more harshly enforced in African American communities and other communities of color. In fact, African Americans are 13 times more likely to go to jail for the same drug-related offenses than their Caucasian counterparts. And yet, the United States continues to spend over $40 billion dollars a year on the war on drugs.

"The War on Drugs has done nothing to curb the drug-related violence in communities of color across this nation," stated Alice Huffman, NAACP California State Conference President and Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee on the NAACP National Board of Directors. "We believe this partnership with the Caravan for Peace will call attention to the flaws in our current system, including a lack of funding for rehabilitative programs and inequities in the enforcement of drug laws in communities of color."

The NAACP has suggested this failed policy should be replaced by preventative and rehabilitative initiatives, including sentencing reform to eliminate disparities in drug laws, repealing mandatory minimum sentences, promoting diversion programs, more justly applied prison sentences, improving parole and probation revocation rates, supporting reentry initiatives, supporting youth violence reduction programs, and increasing earned "good time" for prisoners.

More than 100 U.S. organizations are part of the Caravan effort. In addition to NAACP and NALACC, these include Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), National Latino Congreso, Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), Latin America Working Group (LAWG), Border Angels / Angeles de la Frontera, CIP-Americas Program, Presente.org, Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Students for a Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP), Veterans for Peace, Witness for Peace, L.A. Community Legal Center, Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, School of the Americas Watch, Fellowship for Reconciliation and Global Exchange.

Also participating are: Alianza Cívica, Sin Fronteras, INEDIM, Fuerzas Unidas por los Desaparecidos en México, Asociación Popular de Familiares de Migrantes (APOFAM), FUNDEM, Red por los Derechos de la Infancia, CuPIDH, Espolea, Reverdecer, Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la Cultura de Diálogo, Pastoral de Movilidad Humana, Alarbo, Servicios para la Paz, Serapaz, Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (Cencos), and many more.

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For more information:
http://www.caravanforpeace.org

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.