



For Immediate Release

Documentary and Expert Panel on Predatory Lending at The Loft Cinema on Sunday, January 6, 2019 from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm with state policy makers, religious leaders, community leaders and advocates

TUCSON (December 17, 2018) – This short film is a true ‘David and Goliath’ story. The people of South Dakota fought an epic battle against the predatory lending industry. The 30-minute documentary follows the movement to cap the state’s payday, car title, and installment loan interest rates, which previously soared up to 574%. As you watch, you’ll witness the relentless spirit of the broad coalition of South Dakotans that took on the firmly entrenched and well-financed predatory lending industry – **and won**. A resounding 76 percent of voters passed Initiated Measure 21, which capped interest rates on these loans at 36%.

“**Let My People Go: South Dakotans Stop Predatory Lending**” features stories from people stuck in the trap of these high-cost loans during the time that predatory lenders had free rein to charge triple-digit interest rates. South Dakotans from Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and Eagle Butte speak of lenders’ harmful practices, the difficulty in escaping the trap, and the freedom they feel once they are no longer paying on such high-cost loans.

Bipartisan cooperation and strong faith leadership marked the campaign. One co-chair was a conservative pastor and former Republican lawmaker, the other a noted Democrat strategist. Other diverse groups concerned about the well-being of South Dakota’s working families contributed grassroots legwork to passing the reform.

The film also shows what happens to former payday loan stores, many now occupied by churches, credit unions, and restaurants that contribute to the wealth and vibrancy of their neighborhoods and communities. *Let My People Go: South Dakotans Stop Predatory Lending* is a powerful example of people sharing their stories of the harms caused by predatory lending practices, as well as their ability to change them.

The 30-minute documentary will be immediately followed by a panel discussion focused on Arizona’s grass roots efforts to end legalized usury. The event is free and open to the public.

