



## UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

### USCCB Immigration Conference News Clips

**January 13, 2012**

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#### **SALT LAKE TRIBUNE: Former Bush official warns against 'ugly' immigration rhetoric**

By David Montero

January 12, 2012

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/politics/53289976-90/aguilar-conference-fair-herrod.html.csp>

A former official in President George W. Bush's administration said the immigration debate has been co-opted by zero-population control groups touting a brand of nationalism that's damaging the Republican Party with Latinos.

Alfonso Aguilar, the former chief of the U.S. Office of Citizenship, made the comments during an afternoon panel of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops immigration conference Thursday in Salt Lake City.

"There are elements of nationalism taking over some sectors of the conservative movement, and there is some ugly rhetoric," Aguilar said. "We have to unmask the anti-immigration groups."

Aguilar singled out the Federation for American Immigration Reform for pushing agendas that he said don't line up with either the Republican Party or the Catholic Church.

"They believe in zero-population growth," he said. "They believe immigrants contribute to global warming. Since when was that a conservative issue?"

He noted FAIR was founded by John Tanton, who worked several years with Michigan-based Planned Parenthood chapters and wrote extensively about the positive aspects of birth control.

Catholic Church teachings prohibit the use of contraception among its members and also forbid abortions.

But FAIR spokesman Ira Mehlman said his organization isn't partisan and that supporting tighter immigration policies is in the best interest of the country — roughly allowing 300,000 people a year into the country.

"Our interest is in the future of the United States, not the Republican or Democratic parties," Mehlman said. "There is no direct correlation between immigration and economic growth and prosperity. There are all sorts of facets that go into the equation."

FAIR was in the headlines recently when Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach announced his support for GOP presidential hopeful Mitt Romney. Kobach is an attorney with the Immigration Reform Law Center, the legal arm for FAIR that has helped craft and defend a series of tough enforcement-only immigration measures ranging from Arizona's SB1070 law to a similar measure in South Carolina.

Kobach also is a supporter of eliminating the birthright citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and has assisted states' attempts to pass laws that remove birthright citizenship.

Aguilar called Romney's effusive comments about the Kobach endorsement "mind-boggling."

But while Aguilar worried about the toll strident anti-illegal immigration activists were having on the Republican Party, he also cautioned that President Barack Obama remains vulnerable on the issue.

He said the president made it a top priority to engage in comprehensive immigration reform when elected in 2008 and said that with a Democratic majority in Congress, he didn't accomplish anything close to that.

"There have been unfulfilled promises," he said.

Ari Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, said the vacuum has left states to try to craft legislation and he praised Utah for its development of The Utah Compact — which resulted in a series of immigration bills signed into law by Gov. Gary Herbert, including a highly controversial guest-worker law that is the subject of a repeal and replace movement.

On Thursday, State Rep. Chris Herrod, R-Provo, shared with The Salt Lake Tribune his proposal to replace HB116. Among its key provisions is a proposal to remove the start date of July 2013 currently written into the law and instead require permission of Congress for the bill to take effect.

And while HB116 would levy fines against undocumented immigrants working in the state, Herrod's proposal also fines them — with the funds going to a pool for restitution for identity theft victims. The difference, Herrod said, is that his legislation would require them to leave the country.

"I think the bill aligns with the Republican Party platform," Herrod said.

It also allows non-working spouses to apply for a marriage visa and to stay in the state under the premise they have committed only a civil infraction. He said the bill provides compassion sought by The Utah Compact and it aims to keep families together — a chief concern for the Conference of Bishops.

The conference meeting concludes Friday with a panel featuring representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**DESERET NEWS: Immigrant children's access to education, public assistance may be targets of state proposals in 2012**

By Marjorie Cortez

January 12, 2012

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705397254/Immigrant-childrens-access-to-education-public-assistance-may-be-targets-of-state-proposals-in.html>

Absent comprehensive federal immigration reform in 2012, advocates for illegal immigrants are bracing for another wave of state legislative proposals in 2012 intended to restrict children's access to education systems and public assistance programs.

Last year, legislation was introduced in more than a dozen states intended to ban immigrant children's access to public colleges and universities as well as impose stricter verification requirements to attend public schools and qualify for public assistance programs such as food stamps.

"We do expect to see more like bills in the future," said Wendy Cervantes, vice president of immigration and child rights policy for the national child advocacy organization First Focus.

Cervantes, addressing a national conference in Salt Lake City hosted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., said people of faith need to stand up against measures that curb access to education or public assistance programs. Immigrants comprise about 30 percent of the nation's low-income children, thus they are a particularly vulnerable population. Children of immigrants account for nearly one-fourth all children in the United States and the vast majority are U.S. citizens.

While some states have leveled restrictions on immigrant children attending college — eliminating the option of paying in-state tuition rates or even banning students from enrolling in public colleges and universities — some states have contemplated measures to preclude undocumented children from attending public schools, Cervantes said, speaking at the conference, titled "Immigration - A 50-State Issue: A Focus on State and Local Immigration Initiatives."

These proposals conflict with a 1982 Supreme Court decision that struck down a Texas state statute that denied funding for education to illegal immigrant children. The court also struck down a municipal school district's attempt to charge tuition to undocumented children to make up for lost state funding.

Equally troubling, Cervantes said, are state legislative proposals intended to curb children's access to public assistance programs such as food stamps or health care programs.

"Many of these kids are in need of safety net programs but are underrepresented in these programs," Cervantes said.

While most immigrant children are American citizens by birthright, many live in mixed-status households. While the children may qualify for food stamps or other assistance, some families hesitate to apply for benefits because they fear undocumented family members will be turned over to federal immigration authorities.

To complicate matters, most states administer these programs differently. "The rules are very confusing and vary from state to state," Cervantes said. "It makes these very, very critical programs inaccessible to families that need them."

Many punitive legislative measures introduced in state legislatures were defeated due to intensive lobbying the part of religious and child advocates, Cervantes said. In 2011, a few states considered measures to improve access to educational and public assistance programs.

Immigrant children seeking college educations were especially effective in defeating measures to repeal the in-state tuition rates some states extend to immigrant children who attend public colleges.

"These campaigns really made all the difference," she said.

**DESERET NEWS: Bishop Wester calls on Utah Legislature to push Congress to reform nation's immigration laws**

By Marjorie Cortez

January 11, 2012

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705397233/Bishop-Wester-calls-on-Utah-Legislature-to-push-Congress-to-reform-nations-immigration-laws.html>

SALT LAKE CITY — Bishop John C. Wester of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City urged the Utah Legislature Wednesday night to pass a resolution encouraging the state's congressional delegation to lead out on federal solutions to the nation's broken immigration system.

"I call upon our own Legislature, soon to convene, to pass a resolution to direct our Utah congressional delegation to lead the way forward in Congress toward human reform of our laws," Bishop Wester said, speaking on the opening night of a national immigration conference hosted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Bishop Wester's opening address for the three-day event at the Radisson Hotel of Salt Lake City was part pep talk for the clergy, lawyers and diocesan workers engaged in advocating for immigrants, "who bear the brunt of our failed immigration system."

As Congress has failed to address the issue of illegal immigration, state legislatures and local governments "are not hesitating to attempt to fill the vacuum," he said.

Advocates for immigrants need to seize upon the opportunity to stand up against a record number of state immigration laws and local law enforcement initiatives.

"It is clear that Congress will not act on this issue unless a strong national consensus emerges, where the majority of Americans agree on a path forward and communicate that to their federal elected officials," Bishop Wester said.

"The only way that will happen is if the American people are educated on the issues and the realities of immigration, and that can only occur if the issue is right in front of them, being debated in their local communities."

The current patchwork of laws being developed across the country — particularly enforcement measures — "are bound to fail since they will not fix a broken federal immigration system," he said.

Immigrants — the vast majority having lived in the United States five years or more — are not leaving, just hiding in fear, Bishop Wester said. In time, the American public will begin to understand the issue must be addressed comprehensively, on a federal level.

As a voice of faith, the Catholic community, must help shape that consensus. "We must also continue to fight

because of the real suffering that is occurring in immigrant families and communities," he said.

The Utah Compact and similar documents gaining traction in states such as Iowa and Arizona can be useful tools for advocacy because they advocate federal solutions.

"The compact acknowledges and supports the need for law enforcement of immigration laws, but with respect for basic human rights," he said.

The compact also speaks to the issue of enforcement laws breaking up families. "Children are the victims of family separation. As the U.S. bishops have pointed out, a broken immigration system shreds the social fabric of our nation."

Bishop Wester said Christians recently concluded the Christmas season, celebrating the birth of Jesus. As an infant, Jesus and his family fled King Herod as refugees. As an adult, Jesus was an itinerant preacher, a migrant.

"Do not forget that when you are witnessing before the public square on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, you are witnessing for Him, 'for whatsoever you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto Me,'" Bishop Wester said.

In a panel discussion Wednesday night, advocates for immigrants discussed the numerous impacts of immigration laws on the Catholic Church.

Strict enforcement measures have impacted the church's ability to bring foreign-born priests, nuns and other religious workers into the United States.

Miguel Naranjo, managing attorney, Center for Religious Immigration and Protection, CLINIC, said the federal requirements were tightened after authorities reported that R-1 visas - for religious workers - were being used fraudulently. Visits to sponsors revealed a 33 percent fraud rate, which Naranjo disputes. "We don't believe, and we didn't believe at the time, that it was that high. Nevertheless, they changed the program."

This is not unique to the Catholic Church. Naranjo said while touring Temple Square on Wednesday, he met a LDS missionary from Japan. She, too, had encountered a long wait for her R-1 visa.

"She said 'It took so long.' That's what we're finding with priests, religious workers, brothers and sisters," Naranjo said.

Emily Butera, senior program officer for the Women's Refugee Commission in Washington, D.C. said one of the most troubling aspects of the nation's troubled immigration system is breaking up families when parents are deported and children become wards of states. Parents facing deportation may be detained far from their children. They may not know about proceedings to terminate their parental rights.

"Once a child is in child protective services, the logistics of working that reunification are all but impossible," Butera said.

The Catholic Church has also become concerned about undocumented immigrants who cannot obtain civil marriage licenses to marry, which means a growing number of couples cohabitate in conflict with their church's tenets.

The Catholic Church has long maintained that marriage is a fundamental right. The Catholic Church was at the forefront of the interracial marriage debate, said Peggy McCormick, a principal in the Chicago law firm Minsky,

McCormick and Hallagan and adjunct professor for the Loyola School of Law.

"The argument was based on religious liberty not civil rights," McCormick said of the prevailing law on the interracial marriage.

**EFE: Bishops Urge Catholics to Promote Humane Immigration Reform**

January 12, 2012

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2012/01/12/catholic-bishops-urge-humane-immigration-reform/>

Denver – Catholics should be politically active at both the local and national level to promote a humane reform of immigration law is the message coming out of a conference in Salt Lake City sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

"The USCCB doesn't support any state immigration accord, though the dioceses and the state Catholic bishops conferences have done so," Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy and public affairs for the USCCB, told Efe from the Utah capital.

"At the same time, we believe that those accords are useful tools to defend immigrants' rights and to change the characteristics of the immigration debate," he said.

The 300 or so Catholic prelates and activists meeting this week in Salt Lake City are analyzing harsh anti-immigration measures enacted by states such as Arizona and Alabama.

Also on the agenda is a review of the impact on immigrant communities of programs such as Secure Communities, under which state and local law enforcement agencies are required to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

"Given that Congress has not been able to fix our broken immigration system, the front in the immigration debate has shifted to the states and local communities," Appleby said.

"Recognizing that the solution must come at the federal level, the conference provides participants the knowledge and skills to respond at the local level," he said.

The Salt Lake City gathering includes legal-services providers, leaders of pro-immigrant groups and church administrators from across the United States.

The keynote speaker at Wednesday's opening session was Salt Lake City Bishop John C. Wester, who pointed to the Catholic Church's role in promoting the Utah Compact and a similar agreement in Iowa, both attempts to moderate the tone of the immigration debate.

Indeed, he said, one reason why the USCCB decided to meet in Salt Lake City was the adoption in late 2010 of the Utah Compact.

That document, supported by a broad cross-section of business, civic and religious leaders, insisted that Utah lawmakers should take into account factors such as the welfare of families and the needs of the economy in any state laws on immigration.

What happened in Utah showed the potential for progress when people with "differing points of view" work together in good faith, Wester said.

"The respective parties came together and essentially said, 'OK, we have a real issue here. What are we going to do about it? These are real human beings here. This isn't some abstract political debate. These are real human beings who are suffering,'" the bishop recounted.

### **BLOG FOR ARIZONA: Catholic bishops pan Kobach/Romney alliance, support national immigration reform**

By David Safier

January 12, 2012

<http://www.blogforarizona.com/blog/2012/01/catholic-bishops-pan-kobachromney-alliance-support-national-immigration-reform.html>

It's significant this statement by Catholic bishops comes out of Salt Lake City, since the Utah Compact supporting a humane approach to immigration reform has been supported by the Mormon Church.

At the three day U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops immigration conference, the keynote speaker, John Wester, bishop of Salt Lake City's Catholic Archdiocese, came out strongly against the Kris Kobach-style state anti-immigration laws (Kobach was the principal author of SB 1070) and said he was "sad" to hear Romney had embraced Kobach's endorsement.

"We need leadership on immigration reform, and we've seen these state-based approaches don't work," Wester said. "We can't just have people put their finger up in the wind to see which way it's blowing. . . .

"A system of 50 state laws which supplant federal authority is untenable," Wester said. "I hope the Supreme Court agrees with this assessment in the Arizona case. In this regard, I call upon our own Legislature in Utah — soon to convene — to pass a resolution to direct our Utah congressional delegation to lead the way forward in Congress toward humane reform of our laws."

Wester was one of the key signers of the Utah Compact.

As part of Romney's more-conservative-than-thou campaign pandering, he is crowing about Kobach's recent endorsement which gives him much-needed immigrant-bashing bona fides. Plays great in South Carolina. However, leaders of both the Mormon and Catholic churches seem to disagree with his harsh, inhumane position.

### **NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER (Ryan Post): Immigration outreach discussed among conference participants**

By Zoe Ryan

January 13, 2012

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/immigration-outreach-discussed-among-conference-participants>

SALT LAKE CITY -- In case you haven't heard, the U.S. bishops' conference has a special campaign directed toward immigration work. And some parishes have even started committees named after the group.

[Justice for Immigrants](#) [3], the campaign that started in 2005, is focused on uniting and mobilizing Catholic institutions and people of Catholic faith and people of other faiths "in support of a broad legalization program and comprehensive immigration reform." In keeping with the U.S. and Mexican bishops' pastoral letter, "Strangers No Longer," it is also committed to maximizing the church's influence on this issue, according to its website.

"The JFI campaign has established diocesan partnerships to carry out parish organizing in a number of dioceses throughout the country," said Tony Cubé, national manager for Justice for Immigrants, at a workshop session hosted

by Justice for Immigrants at this week's "Immigration: A 50-State Issue" conference in Salt Lake City.

He listed dioceses and archdioceses that have had success with outreach, such as Miami, Orlando and Philadelphia.

When you bring together immigrant groups and non-immigrant groups at Catholic celebrations (such as an Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration), "it breaks down barriers," he said.

"It shows that we are ... one family under God, and our way of worshiping is universal, international," he said.

Strategies mentioned by a group from the San Jose, Calif., diocese include a story-telling project (they gathered recorded stories of interviews with immigrants, using some of the material to create a musical, which will also work as a fundraiser); outreaches to parish and high schools; research trips to Phoenix, Puebla and other cities; regular diocesan meetings; an annual leadership day; and engaging other groups in outreach.

The group's steering committee focuses on advocacy, education and community organizing. One parish in San Jose that was mentioned in the workshop implemented this outreach and saw a dip in collection contributions. But over time, collection contributions gradually increased, finally settling at a level above what the average had been before the outreach began.

**NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER (Ryan Post): In Salt Lake City, Catholics focus on immigration**

By Zoe Ryan

January 12, 2012

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/salt-lake-city-catholics-focus-immigration>

SALT LAKE CITY -- The U.S. Catholic bishops' immigration conference in Salt Lake City this morning focused on details about current laws and legislation, as well as the status of enforcement and concerns from people who work in immigration-related areas.

The focus of the conference is to closely look at state and local immigration initiatives. The conference dives into detail, rather than just brushing over general immigration facts.

The hosts of the conference are the Migration and Refugee Services (MRS), the U.S. bishops' conference, and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).

Panelists for the first session today included Karen Lucas, an advocacy attorney from CLINIC; Tyler Moran, policy director at the National Immigration Law Center; Wendy Cervantes, vice president of immigration and child rights policy at First Focus.

E-Verify was discussed in length (E-Verify has appeared in many immigration laws) in the first session today. Moran from the National Immigration Law Center listed five strategies her organization used at a federal and state level to work against E-Verify. From the list, she highlighted what implementing the program would cost to small businesses.

How laws affect children and families was also discussed in this and the next session (ex: what physical and mental changes happen in children when one (or both) parent is deported).

Later that day, the Secure Communities program raised a lot of questions in the Q&A session.

Panelists included Laura Olson from the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at the Department of Homeland

Security and Don Kerwin, executive director at the Center for Migration Studies (originally scheduled to be a respondent to John Sandweg, the special counselor to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano; Sandweg is expected tomorrow).

"The Obama administration is on pace to deport 1.5 million persons over four years. Just by way of comparison, the last 20 years of Republican presidents, we deported in total 2.3 million," Kerwin said. More on that to come.

The Civil Rights and Civil Liberties office works to cover all activities that the Department of Homeland Security is involved in, which is more than just immigration, Olson said. She works in the immigration section. Her office is working closely with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) on awareness briefings that go to state and local officials regarding Secure Communities, she said.

Relationships between immigrants and local police forces was also discussed.

**January 12, 2012**

### **Salt Lake Tribune: Conference of Bishops pans state immigration laws**

By David Montero

January 11, 2012

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/53283574-78/conference-enforcement-federal-immigration.html.csp>

John Wester, bishop of Salt Lake City's Catholic Archdiocese, said Wednesday he was "sad" to hear Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney accept the endorsement of the key architect for several state-based enforcement-only immigration laws.

Wester made the remark after giving the keynote speech at the opening session of three-day U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops immigration conference at the Radisson Hotel.

"We need leadership on immigration reform, and we've seen these state-based approaches don't work," Wester said. "We can't just have people put their finger up in the wind to see which way it's blowing."

Romney touted the endorsement of Kris Kobach on Wednesday as he headed into the upcoming South Carolina primary.

Kobach, Kansas' secretary of state, helped craft Arizona's SB1070 enforcement-only law as well as South Carolina's law, and he has been at the forefront of the anti-immigration movement.

"I'm so proud to earn Kris' support," Romney said in his statement. "Kris has been a true leader on securing our borders and stopping the flow of illegal immigration into this country. We need more conservative leaders like Kris willing to stand up for the rule of law."

Wester, in his 30-minute speech to a packed room of about 300 clergy and lay members of the Catholic Church, challenged state lawmakers to stop passing unenforceable laws and to instead pass a resolution urging Utah's congressional delegation to pass "humane," comprehensive reform.

"A system of 50 state laws which supplant federal authority is untenable," Wester said. "I hope the Supreme Court agrees with this assessment in the Arizona case. In this regard, I call upon our own Legislature in Utah — soon to

convene —to pass a resolution to direct our Utah congressional delegation to lead the way forward in Congress toward humane reform of our laws.”

But a Pew Research survey released Wednesday shows religious communities aren't necessarily of one mind when it comes to immigration reform.

Members of the LDS Church, according to the study, were almost evenly split — 41-45 — on whether immigrants either burden the country or strengthen the country. The study found Protestants saw immigrants as a burden by a 52-37 mark while Catholics saw them as a strength by a 55-35 margin.

Salt Lake City was chosen to host the three-day conference on immigration because of The Utah Compact and the Legislature's unique approach to addressing reform in the last session with the passage of an enforcement-only law, a guest worker law and migrant worker exchange law with Mexico.

The Compact, signed more than a year ago by religious, political and businesses leaders, was intended as a guiding document that stressed federal solutions, compassion and the economic contributions of immigrants. It has been replicated in several states, including Iowa and Indiana, and served as the inspiration for Utah's raft of immigration bills.

Wester opposed both Utah's enforcement-only law — currently tied up in federal court — and the guest-worker law — the subject of a bitter divide in Utah's Republican Party — because he said they were both unconstitutional and believed reform must happen at the federal level.

Kevin Appleby, USCCB director of migration policy, said there are two key events happening this year that could force the issue.

In his introduction of Wester, Appleby said the presidential election “will determine where Congress and the federal government goes on the issue,” and said the expected ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court this spring on Arizona's enforcement-only law, SB1070, “would determine the debate on immigration for the next generation.”

But Wester said federal inaction is forcing states to have debates and pass legislation at the local level.

In Utah, with its legislative session set to start on Jan. 23, there are already immigration bills being readied for introduction —including one by Rep. Chris Herrod, R-Provo, that would alter the guest-worker law, and another by Rep. Stephen Sandstrom, R-Orem, to penalize companies for hiring undocumented immigrants.

**January 11, 2012**

**DESERET NEWS: Catholic bishops, advocates to meet in Salt Lake to discuss immigration reform**

By Marjorie Cortez

January 10, 2012

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705397165/Catholic-bishops-advocates-to-meet-in-Salt-Lake-to-discuss-immigration-reform.html>

Fixing the nation's broken immigration system is a federal responsibility, says Bishop John C. Wester of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City.

But increasingly, the debate has shifted to state legislatures and local government, where legislative bodies have developed policies ranging from strict enforcement measures to guest worker programs.

"We've got to be able to adjust and be flexible to what is going on the ground," said Bishop Wester said in an interview Tuesday in advance of a national conference on immigration reform in Salt Lake City. The three-day event is hosted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services and Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc.

"What we'd like to do is move the focus back to the federal government," he said.

The conference, "Immigration: A 50-State Issue, A Focus on State and Local Immigration Initiatives," gets under way Wednesday evening at the Radisson Hotel.

Utah was selected to host the conference, in part, because of the Utah Compact . The document outlined five principles to guide Utah's immigration debate during the 2011 legislative session. The compact acknowledges that immigration is primarily a federal responsibility but policies should take into consideration the needs of families, the economy, a free society and law enforcement. The document was signed by a wide array of business, civic and religious leaders.

Utah's experience demonstrated what can happen when people of good will come together, "albeit we have differing points of view," Bishop Wester said.

The respective parties came together and essentially said, "OK, we have a real issue here. What are we going to do about it? These are real human beings here. This isn't some abstract political debate. These are real human beings who are suffering," Bishop Wester said.

Conference organizers also recognize that Utah is a destination state for many immigrants, Bishop Wester said. "In our own Catholic Church, 80 percent of Catholics speak Spanish. That's an incredible statistic."

Utah's recent experiences are also instructive from the perspective that immigration cannot be viewed simply as a political issue. "You can't look at it from one lens, from one point of view," he said.

Bishop Wester will provide the keynote address the opening night of the conference, which will be limited to registered participants and invited guests.

The conference will examine enforcement-only approaches, such as those attempted in Arizona and Alabama. Participants will also explore federal-state enforcement partnerships, such as the Secure Communities program, and impact on local immigrant communities. Representatives of the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security are scheduled as presenters.

"While the solution lies at the federal level, the conference should provide participants the knowledge and skills to engage the issue locally," said Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop Wester said the Catholic Church, among many voices, advocates for changes to federal laws that "meet the needs of the country and meet the needs of the immigrant today."

All people should be able to live in dignity, raise their families in safety, worship according to their choices and be educated, he said. "This is based, really, on gospel values — loving thy neighbor as ourselves, listening to their

story."

The United States, as a nation, has been very blessed, Bishop Wester said.

"We advocate using those blessings, those graces, for the good of our country and the good of our immigrants," he said.

**January 9, 2012**

### **Salt Lake Tribune: Conference of Bishops pans state immigration laws**

By David Montero

January 9, 2012

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/politics/53263594-90/bishops-compact-conference-immigration.html.csp>

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will hold a three-day conference on immigration reform in Salt Lake City beginning Wednesday, tackling state-initiated laws and how they impact local communities.

Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy with the USCCB, said Utah was chosen because of its "unique laws" related to state-based immigration reform as well as it being the home of The Utah Compact.

The compact, signed in November 2010 by political, religious and business leaders, was crafted as a foundation for a humane approach to immigration reform that focused on compassion, a recognition of economic contributions of immigrants and a desire for federal solutions. It has served as a template for compacts in Indiana, Maine and Iowa.

Appleby said Utah's approach made it a logical choice to host the conference, which is titled, "Immigration: A 50-State Issue, A Focus on State and Local Immigration Initiatives."

"Our hope is that we can start moving toward a consensus on the issue and get some sort of agreement on a federal level," Appleby said. "Our belief is the solution lies at the federal level and we need to find the political momentum toward that end."

He said the time was meant to have discussions on the issue prior to states starting their legislative sessions. Utah's session begins Jan. 23 and there is already a series of bills on immigration that are expected to be introduced — including an E-Verify bill putting teeth in a law requiring businesses to verify the legal status of employees and an attempt to replace the state's guest-worker law.

That law, HB116, was highly controversial and has been the subject of a repeal movement that gathered steam as delegates at the state Republican Convention voted for a resolution to repeal it.

The law doesn't take effect until 2013 and would require undocumented immigrants in the state who were here prior to May 2011 to get background checks and pay fines in exchange for being able to live and work in the state with proper documents.

Rep. Chris Herrod, R-Provo, plans to unveil a replacement bill for HB116, and the Utah Coalition on Illegal Immigration plans to hold a series of forums beginning Thursday in Salt Lake City to fuel the effort to eliminate the current law.

Ron Mortensen, co-founder of the coalition, said he's not surprised the Catholic bishops chose Utah to host their

conference based on The Utah Compact — a document he denounced as “disingenuous.”

“It doesn’t even have the guts to use the word ‘illegal’ in it,” Mortensen said. He also ripped HB116 as unconstitutional.

But Michael Clara, state chairman of the Utah Republican Hispanic Assembly, said the bishops are simply recognizing Utah as a “leader in the nation for sensible immigration reform that is now modeled throughout the country.”

Appleby said he hoped the conference would drive discourse on the immigration debate “in a way that addresses the humanity of immigrants rather than scapegoating them or making them less than human.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops consists of 456 active and retired bishops throughout the country. Salt Lake City Bishop John Wester is the former chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Migration. Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez is the current chairman.

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Catholic bishops gather in SLC

Where • Raddison Hotel, 215 W. South Temple

Highlights • 6 p.m. Wednesday, dinner and panel on immigration laws and their impact on the church. Kicked off by Salt Lake City Bishop John Wester.