

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES
UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

THE MIGRATION REVIEW

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The Migration Review is a bi-monthly publication produced by Migration and Refugee Services at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its purpose is to help keep you informed on migration related issues that are important to the Conference and the bishops. We recognize how difficult it is to keep attuned to the incredible amount of information that is produced on this subject every month and thus we hope to be a resource that will make this task a little easier.

Included in the newsletter are policy updates that will highlight important events on Capitol Hill, documents issued by the Church, summaries of reports and studies produced by universities think tanks and other organizations, analyses of pressing topics related to migration, and other items of interest that will help you to remain informed about these issues.

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ISSUE BRIEFING: WHY DON'T THEY COME HERE LEGALLY?

In the fractious debate surrounding both legal and illegal immigration to the United States, politicians, the public, and pundits alike eventually cycle back to one fundamental question – why don't they come here legally? Why don't the estimated 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants presently in the United States stand in line with the rest of the immigrants seeking to enter lawfully? If our ancestors did it, why can't they?

In the United States today, there are an estimated 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants.ⁱ Sixty percent of these immigrants are from Mexico.ⁱⁱ Another 20 percent are from other Latin American countries.ⁱⁱⁱ Eleven percent comes from South and East Asia.^{iv} Combined, unauthorized workers comprise more than five percent of the U.S. workforce.^v Many understandably ask why these millions of unauthorized immigrants did not seek to come to the United States lawfully. Some argue that if their ancestors could do it, so should the unauthorized immigrants in our country today.



Along the U.S./Mexican border in the Nogales area, the graffiti highlights the number of migrant deaths accounted for in 2005
Photo Credit: Tommy Bassett/CRS

Many of our ancestors didn't actually come here through federal "legal" channels – there weren't restrictive federal immigration laws in place at the time.

Yet, until the 1870's, the federal government did virtually nothing to restrict immigration to the United States. In most cases, immigrants who arrived to the United States in search of work or a new life simply settled in the country and became citizens after a period of time.^{vi} In 1875, Congress passed the Page Law, restricting immigration of women engaged in polygamy and prostitution, with enforcement provisions particularly focused on Chinese women.^{vii} Seven years later, in 1882, Congress promulgated the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, restricting immigration of Chinese laborers.^{viii} Congress eventually expanded these restrictions on Chinese immigration to exclude Asian immigrants generally.^{ix} However, immigration by those arriving from non-Asian countries was not significantly restricted until the 1920's, by which time many of our immigrant ancestors had already arrived. Indeed, during that period immigration from various parts of the world to the United States was widespread; by 1870, forty percent of the residents of New York, Chicago, and other major metropolitan areas, were foreign-born.^x

In 1921, beginning with the Emergency Quota Act, the United States began to restrict immigration through the use of national origins quotas.^{xi} The quota system was restructured multiple times in subsequent years, leaving some regions of the world at a disadvantage at certain points.^{xii} In 1965, amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 abolished the quota system, prioritizing instead family-based immigration.^{xiii} Subsequent immigration laws have been increasingly restrictive. For instance, in 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed to control and deter unlawful immigration to the United States, making it unlawful to knowingly hire unauthorized immigrants and increasing border enforcement.^{xiv} Ten years later, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) created penalties for those who had been "unlawfully present" in the country, establishing three and ten year bars to lawful reentry.^{xv}

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Today’s unauthorized immigrants would prefer to live and work lawfully in the United States if they could.

Moreover, according to two well-regarded opinion surveys of unauthorized immigrants in the United States, the large majority of those unauthorized in the country today would have preferred to enter lawfully if they could have. In fact, some 98 percent of those surveyed indicated that they would prefer to live and work lawfully, rather than in unauthorized status.^{xvi}

Under current laws, no “line” for lawful immigration to the United States actually exists for the majority of our immigrants.

So, why didn’t they just “stand in line” to do so? For the large majority of unauthorized immigrants, no such “line” exists. Under the current immigration legal framework, lawful immigration to the United States is restricted to only a few narrow categories of persons.^{xvii} Most current unauthorized immigrants residing in the United States are ineligible to enter legally with a “green card” as a lawful permanent resident for the purpose of living and working in the country. This is because most do not have the family relationships required to apply for lawful entry; they do not qualify as asylees because of economic hardship as such status is available only to those who are fleeing persecution; and the majority of the unauthorized do not hold advanced degrees and work in the high-skilled professions that would qualify them for work-sponsored lawful permanent residency.

U.S. immigration laws provide three core means by which an immigrant may obtain lawful permanent residency.^{xviii} First, a qualified family member in the United States may petition to bring a foreign-born family member to the country lawfully. U.S. Citizens may petition for lawful permanent residency for their spouses, parents, children or siblings. Lawful Permanent Residents in the country may petition for their foreign-born spouses and unmarried children. To do so, sponsors must demonstrate an income level above poverty line and must commit to financially support the sponsored, foreign-born family member so that they do not become a public charge. The foreign-born immigrant, in turn, must meet all other eligibility requirements.^{xix} However, there are numeric limitations on most of these family-based categories, resulting in backlogs for entry that often range anywhere from five years to nearly 20 years.

Second, immigrants fleeing political persecution or a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of their race, religion, membership in a particular social group, political opinion or national origin may seek political asylum in the United States or qualify for refugee status. To do so, they must meet a high evidentiary burden. Even if they do qualify for refugee status, there is an annual cap on the number of refugee admissions to the United States, which is set annually and is typically between 70,000 and 80,000.^{xx} Most of today’s unauthorized immigrants are fleeing poverty in their home countries, not political persecution. As a result, they do not qualify for asylum.

Third, and significantly, there are various immigration categories for workers to be sponsored by a U.S. based employer to come to the United States to work and live lawfully. However, these categories are limited to multinational executives and professors; those with advanced degrees, the exceptional in the arts, sciences or business; and narrowly-defined, specialized workers.^{xxi} Today’s unauthorized immigrants are largely low-skilled workers who come to the United States for work to support their families. They work in the agricultural, meatpacking, landscaping, services, and construction industries in the United States. They fill the ranks of U.S. businesses, large and small throughout the country. Over the past several decades, the demand by U.S. businesses for low-skilled workers has grown exponentially, while the supply of available workers for low-skilled jobs in the United States has diminished.^{xxii} Yet, there are only 5,000 green cards available annually for

low-skilled workers to enter the United States lawfully.^{xxiii} This number stands in stark contrast to the estimated 300,000 immigrants who enter the United States unlawfully each year, most of whom are looking for work.^{xxiv} The

only alternative to this is to secure a temporary work visa through the H-2A (seasonal agricultural) or H2B (seasonal non-agricultural) visa programs which provide temporary status to low-skilled workers seeking to enter the country lawfully. While H-2A visas are not numerically capped, the requirements are onerous. H-2B visas are capped at 66,000 annually. Both only provide temporary status to work for a U.S. employer for one year.^{xxv} At their current numbers, these are woefully insufficient to provide legal means for the foreign-born to enter the United States to live and work, and thereby meet our demand for foreign-born labor.

Conclusion

The USCCB believes that immigrants should come to the United States lawfully, but it also understands that the current immigration legal framework does not adequately reunify families and is non-responsive our country's need for labor. Our country must pass immigration reform laws to ensure the rule of law in the United States, while simultaneously ensuring that the laws that rule are responsive to our economy's demand for labor, rooted in the reunification of family, and respectful of the humanity of the immigrants in our midst. The USCCB supports immigration reform that would increase the number of visas available for low-skilled workers and facilitate family reunification.

ⁱ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *US Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2010), 1, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/126.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Passel and Cohn, *U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade*, iv.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Id.*

^{iv} *Id.*

^v Passel and Cohn, *U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade*, 1, 9.

^{vi} Kevin J. Fandl, *Immigration Posses: U.S. Immigration Law and Local Enforcement Practices*, 34 *J. Legis.* 18 (2008) (“The United States passed its first immigration law in 1790, which formally moved the topic of immigration from state to federal control and which established a uniform rule of naturalization by requiring residence for two years. This residence requirement was expanded to five years in 1795, where it remains today. It was not until 1798 that an alien registry was established and records of arriving aliens were kept. . . .not until 1862 was a prohibition on a type of immigrant enacted. Thus, all non-dangerous immigrants were allowed entry into the United States and an opportunity to become citizens through the beginning of the Civil War.”).

^{vii} Kerry Abrams, *Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law*, 105 *Colum. L. Rev.* 641, 643 (April 2005).

^{viii} *Id.* at 645.

^{ix} Kerry Abrams, *The Hidden Dimension of Nineteenth Century Immigration Law*, 62 *Vand. L. Rev.* 1353, 1354 (October 2009). See also Act of Feb. 5, 1917 (Immigration Act of 1917), ch. 29, § 2, 29 Stat. 874, 876 (repealed 1952) (restricting Asian immigration).

^x *Id.*

^{xi} See Act of May 19, 1921 (Quota Act (Three Per Cent Act)), ch. 8, § 2, 42 Stat. 5, 5 (repealed 1952) (establishing the three percent immigration quota limit).

^{xii} See, e.g., Act of May 26, 1924 (Immigration Act of 1924), ch. 190, § 11, 43 Stat. 153, 159 (repealed 1952) (reducing the quota to two percent).

^{xiii} See Pub. L. No. 89-236, 79 Stat. 911 (Oct. 3, 1965).

^{xiv} See Pub. L. No. 99-603 (Act of 11/6/86).

^{xv} See Immigration and Nationality Act § 212(a)(9)(B)(i)(I)-(II).

^{xvi} <http://www.immigrationforum.org/press/release-display/listening-to-the-voices-ofimmigrants-in-the-immigration-debate> (last visited, January 6, 2011).

^{xvii} <http://www.uscis.gov/greencard> (last visited, January 6, 2011).

^{xviii} *Id.*

^{xix} *Id.*

^{xx} <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=734> (last visited, January 18, 2010).

^{xxi} *Id.*

^{xxii} Gordon H. Hanson, *The Economics and Policy of Illegal Immigration in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (December 2009).

^{xxiii} *Id.* at 6.

^{xxiv} Passel and Cohn, *U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade*, iii.

^{xxv} Hanson, *The Economics and Policy of Illegal Immigration in the United States* at 6.

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*

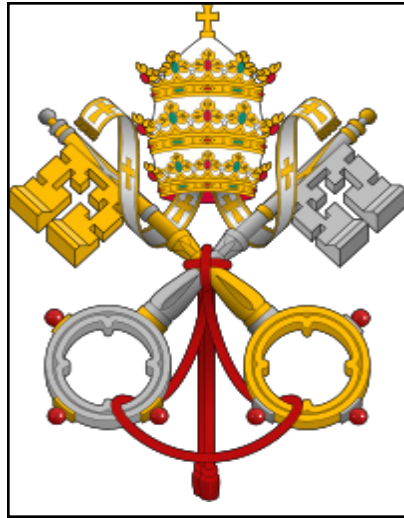
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html

Caritas in Veritate is Pope Benedict XVI's third encyclical to date and is published in honor of Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*. A primary theme throughout this new encyclical is the importance of Pope Paul's notion of integral development and its application to the Twenty First Century world. For both Paul VI and Benedict XVI, integral development focuses on the person in her entirety: the spiritual, intellectual, personal and material characteristics. Although it presupposes a theological foundation with a view towards eternity, the notion of development has a temporal character as well, as it takes place in history. A proper understanding of integral development must consider the economic, political, and social conditions that affect human communities around the globe. Consequently, throughout the encyclical Benedict turns his attention to a wide range of pressing topics, including the environment, economic institutions, the nation state, and, of particular interest to us, the question of migration.

The Holy Father explicitly addresses migration in three places (#21, 62 and 67). His first reference places mass migration among a list of other issues that are deserving of attention in the midst of dramatic political and cultural changes in the modern world. Responding to the complex character of these issues requires that we step back and "confront a world in need of profound cultural renewal, a world that needs to rediscover fundamental values on which to build a better future." In the remainder of the encyclical Pope Benedict lays out a moral vision for the future that takes into account these complexities and the values that can be used to respond effectively to them.

The second reference provides the most extended analysis of migration in the encyclical. Here he examines the

the ways mass migration presents obstacles to authentic human development. The movement of large numbers of people across the globe can dramatically affect the shape of cultural, political, religious and economic



The crossed keys symbolise the keys of Simon Peter. The keys are gold and silver to represent the power of loosing and binding. The triple crown (the tiara) represents the pope's three functions as "supreme pastor", "supreme teacher" and "supreme priest". The gold cross on a monde (globe) surmounting the tiara symbolizes the sovereignty of Jesus.

conditions in every nation. Because it is a global phenomenon, no country can single handedly address the problem on its own. Pope Benedict writes that as a result of mass migration "we are facing a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions that requires bold, forward looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively." It is essential that international legal norms be put into place that will protect the rights and needs of migrants and their families. Further, he both highlights the "significant contribution" that migrants give to their host countries through their labor and warns against treating migrants as a commodity, but rather as human beings endowed with basic human rights.

It is perhaps not surprising that Benedict follows this section with a note on the important relationship between poverty, unemployment and the dignity of work.

Any authentic form of development should aim at creating conditions that enable people to find work in their particular society and provide educational opportunities for their children. Given the close association between unemployment, poverty and forced migration, Benedict indirectly addresses the overlap between migration and economic development.

In his third reference to migration, the Holy Father elaborates on his earlier observation of the importance of creating international legal norms given the globalization of problems that confront the world community. The reform of international bodies, including the United Nations and related economic institutions is crucial if the world community hopes to address global problems like environmental degradation, food security,

economies in crisis, timely disarmament and unregulated migration. There is “an urgent need of a true world political authority” that would be “universally recognized and . . . vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for rights.” In calling for this ‘world political authority’ it would be an error to assume that he is calling for the abolition of the state, a point that he explicitly guards against elsewhere (#41). Rather, he is drawing attention to the fact that global problems need an international solution, as individual states are not equipped to provide such solutions on their own.

This brief overview cannot provide an exhaustive review of the multiple observations made by Benedict XVI that are applicable to migration. Instead, it focuses primarily on overt references. An extended study would show a wide range of factors that feed into the migration problem and that are relevant to our work in the JFI campaign. We already noted Benedict’s indirect association between poverty, employment and forced migration. Elsewhere Benedict addresses problems that could easily be applied to migrants and their families, including the exploitation of vulnerable populations by employers (#22), the economic effects of globalization (#33), and even the effect that environmental degradation (#51) has on migration patterns.

Pope Benedict XVI, “One Human Family,” 2011 World Day of Migrants and Refugees Message
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/index_en.htm

Focusing on the theme, “One Human Family,” Pope Benedict XVI’s 2011 World Day of Migrants and Refugees message highlights the unity of the one human family, which is itself revealed both in the process of history and in the life of the Church. Historically and sociologically, the unity of the human race is revealed through the ongoing process of globalization wherein communication technologies and increasing political and economic bonds tie nations and peoples more closely together. But this sign of unity is a fragile one as tensions between nation states are still readily apparent and signified through war, strife, and inequality. Under-development is itself a primary cause in the migration phenomenon and is itself a sign of the weakening of the “brotherly ties between individuals and nations.”

In contrast to the frailty of the world, the Church has the capacity to function as a more lasting sign of unity that exists between all people, no matter race or nationality. God calls us to be beloved children in his beloved Son and in doing so calls us to be brothers and sisters in Christ. More explicit still, Pope Benedict remarks that it is the Liturgy and the Eucharist that constitutes “an inexhaustible source of communion for the whole of humanity.” It is a sign and symbol of this unity. Like our migrant brethren, the Church herself is journeying through history with her eyes focused on its end point, the Kingdom of God, but as an institution that remains embedded in history, all Catholics and people of good faith are called on to “establish a universal brotherhood.” Expressing particular concern for those who are forced migrants, such as refugees, but in relation to all migrants, the pope calls on us to live in a spirit of solidarity, nourished “by the reserve of love that is born from considering ourselves a single human family and, for the Catholic faithful, members of the Mystical Body of Christ.”

His message reasserts many of the same themes found in some of his earlier writings, including an emphasis on globalization that was fundamental to his 2007 migration day message and in his most recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*. In both publications Pope Benedict recognized the fact that the fundamental causes of migration are structural in human society today. Building off of this insight, he further stressed the international character of migration and the necessity of dealing with it and its underlying causes on its proper plane. In other words, it is a problem that cannot be adequately dealt with on the level of the nation state alone. While continuing to emphasize the proper sovereignty of states, there is a fine balance between doing so and while at the same time effectively addressing problems that cannot be dealt without an appeal to international institutions.

Background: On January 26, 2011, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement held its first hearing of the 112th Congress and focused on the issue of worksite enforcement. The witness list included Kumar Kibble (Deputy Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department of Homeland Security), who testified on behalf of the Obama Administration, Mark Krikorian (Executive Director, Center for Immigration Studies) and Michael Cutler (INS Senior Special Agent), who were witnesses called by the Republicans, and Daniel Griswold (Director, Center for Trade Policy Studies Cato Institute), a witness called by the Democrats.

In addition, his Excellency Jose H. Gomez, Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles and Chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration submitted written testimony to be included in the record. Please find a copy of his complete testimony below:

TESTIMONY OF MOST REVEREND JOSE H. GOMEZ

*Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles, California
Chair, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration*

On

*ICE Worksite Enforcement
Before*

*The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement
January 26, 2011*



I am Jose' Gomez, Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles and Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB or the Conference) Committee on Migration. I testify before you today on behalf of the USCCB Committee on Migration.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Subcommittee Chairman Elton Gallegly (R-CA) and Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) for permitting me to submit testimony before the Subcommittee on this important matter.

My testimony before the Subcommittee will outline the Conference's position on workplace enforcement of immigration laws, which includes our recommendation that Congress:

1. Prioritize and pursue comprehensive immigration reform in lieu of enforcement-only measures to address the issues of unauthorized immigration in the United States; and
2. De-emphasize the use of workplace raids – in which immigrants are detained and families are separated – as a measure to enforce immigration laws in the U.S. workplace.

The Role of the U.S. Catholic Bishops in the Immigration Policy Debate

Mr. Chairman, the issue of immigration is complex and elicits strong opinions and emotions from all sides of the public debate. It touches upon our national economic, social, and cultural interests and has been analyzed and

dissected predominately in those terms. From the perspective of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, immigration is ultimately a humanitarian issue because it impacts the basic human rights and dignity of the human person.

The U.S. Catholic Church has a long history of involvement in immigration; both in the advocacy arena and in welcoming and assimilating waves of immigrants and refugees who have helped build our nation throughout her history. There are 158 Catholic immigration legal services programs throughout the country serving immigrants under the auspices of the U.S. Bishops.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops acknowledge the right of the sovereign to enforce its immigration laws. In the pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, USCCB recognized the right of the sovereign to control and protect its borders, stating: “we accept the legitimate role of the U.S. . . . government in intercepting undocumented migrants who attempt to travel through or cross into [the country].” The U.S. Bishops emphasized, however, that “. . .[w]e do not accept . . . some of the policies and tactics that our government has employed to meet this . . . responsibility.”¹

In *Strangers No Longer*, the U.S. Bishops made clear that despite the sovereign’s right to control its borders and engage in enforcement of immigration laws, the “human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.” We declared that “[r]egardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected . . . Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.”²

The Conference’s Call for Comprehensive Immigration Reform in Lieu of an Enforcement-Only Approach

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, there are currently 11.1 million unauthorized persons residing in the United States.³ Of these, approximately 7.8 million – or 70 percent -- are in the U.S. labor force.⁴ Each year, between 300,000 and 500,000 more unauthorized immigrants enter the country.⁵ In large part, these immigrants feel compelled to enter because of either the explicit or implicit promise of employment in the U.S. agriculture, construction, and service industries, among others. Most of this unauthorized flow comes from Mexico, a nation struggling with severe poverty, where it is often impossible for many to earn a living wage and meet the basic needs of their families.

Survival has thus become the primary impetus for unauthorized migration flows into the United States. Today’s unauthorized migrants are largely low-skilled workers who come to the United States for work to support their families. They work in the agricultural, meatpacking, landscaping, services, and construction industries in the United States. They fill the ranks of U.S. businesses, large and small throughout the country.

Over the past several decades, the demand by U.S. businesses for low-skilled workers has grown exponentially, while the supply of available workers willing to perform these low-skilled jobs in the United States has diminished. Yet, there are only 5,000 green cards available annually for low-skilled workers to enter the United States lawfully to reside and work.⁶ This number stands in stark contrast to the estimated 300,000-500,000 migrants who enter the United States without authorization each year, most of whom are looking for work.⁷ The only alternative to this is a temporary work visa through the H-2A (seasonal agricultural) or H2B (seasonal non-agricultural) visa programs which provide temporary status to low-skilled workers seeking to enter the country lawfully.⁸ While H-2A visas are not numerically capped, agricultural employers have reported great difficulty in making use of them.⁹ H-2B visas are capped at 66,000 annually. Both only provide temporary status to work for a U.S. employer for one year. At their current numbers, these are woefully insufficient to provide legal means for the foreign-born to enter the United States to live and work, and thereby meet our demand for foreign-born labor.

Over the past decade alone, Congress has spent \$117 billion of taxpayer dollars on immigration enforcement

initiatives, yet the number of undocumented in the country has grown and the demand for foreign-born, low-skilled labor has continued on pace with the ebbs and flows of the U.S. economy.¹⁰ It is clear that another approach is necessary.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S. Catholic Bishops do not believe that “enforcement only” immigration policies will humanely resolve the policy dilemma created by an increasing number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States.

Rather, we support comprehensive immigration reform to fix what has become a broken system. Such reform would include: an earned legalization program for foreign nationals of good moral character; the reform of the family-based immigration system; a revamped temporary worker regime that protects both the workers who would come to the United States and U.S. citizen workers; the restoration of immigrants’ due process rights; and an effort to meaningfully address the root causes of migration, such as under-development and poverty in sending countries.

Moreover, such reform would include the targeted, proportional, and humane enforcement of immigration laws. The U.S. Catholic Bishops accept the legitimate role of the U.S. government in intercepting unauthorized migrants who attempt to travel to the United States. The U.S. Bishops also believe that by increasing lawful means for migrants to enter, live, and work in the United States, law enforcement will be better able to focus upon those who truly threaten public safety: drug and human traffickers, smugglers, and would-be terrorists. It is our view that comprehensive immigration reform would help restore the rule of law by replacing unauthorized migration flows with meaningful and adequate legal avenues for migration, compatible with both our future labor needs and our ongoing prioritization of family reunification.

The Conference’s Position on Worksite Enforcement of Immigration Laws

As you know, Mr. Chairman, section 274A of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) prohibits employers from employing individuals who they know are not authorized to work. Specifically, INA §274A makes it unlawful for an employer to knowingly hire, recruit or refer for a fee, or continue to employ an alien who is not authorized to be so employed. It also makes it unlawful for an employer to hire an individual for employment without examining documents to verify the newly-hired individual’s identity and work eligibility. An employer who violates these provisions of section 274A of the INA may be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is responsible for enforcing these prohibitions on the employment of unauthorized immigrants. It has done so, Mr. Chairman, through a combination of audits of employers’ I-9 records to determine compliance with verification requirements; workplace raids; and the use of sanctions.

Mr. Chairman, worksite enforcement of immigration laws can achieve important purposes. Foremost among those are ensuring that unscrupulous employers are not violating the rights of immigrant workers in the workplace.

However, the U.S. Catholic Bishops are opposed to the use of workplace raids, in which employees are administratively arrested, to achieve our immigration law enforcement objectives. Over the course of the past few years, ICE engaged in a series of high-profile workplace raids. For instance, in December 2006, ICE apprehended nearly 1,300 unauthorized migrants in six U.S. cities. In another instance, in March 2007, ICE apprehended over 360 migrants in a raid in New Bedford, Massachusetts. And, in workplace raids in 2008, ICE apprehended nearly 400 migrants in Postville, Iowa; some 600 immigrants in Laurel, Mississippi; and 160 immigrants in Houston, Texas. In 2009, ICE apprehended nearly 30 unauthorized migrants in a workplace raid in Bellingham, Washington.

Although ICE undertook these raids in disparate industries in distinct cities across the United States, a common theme binds them all: the destruction of the family. Mr. Chairman, as a result of each of these very different raids, families and their communities were destroyed. Indeed, as a result of these raids, U.S.-citizen children were

separated from their parents for days, if not longer; immigrants arrested were not afforded the rights of due process or access to legal counsel; and local communities, including legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens, were disrupted and dislocated. Indeed, in a number of raids, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents were swept up and subjected to arrest and detention before determinations were made that they were, in fact, legally present in the United States. The sweeping nature of these raids---which have often involved hundreds of law enforcement personnel with weapons---strike fear in communities, make it difficult for those arrested to secure basic due process protections, including legal counsel, and all-too-often render children parent-less.

USCCB believes that the humanitarian costs of workplace raids are immeasurable and unacceptable in a civilized society. The U.S. Catholic Bishops have witnessed first-hand the suffering of immigrant families and are deeply troubled by the collateral human consequences of immigration enforcement raids on the family unit. Over the years, many of our local parishes have helped respond to human needs generated by these enforcement actions, providing counseling and legal services to individual parents and children and basic needs assistance to immigrant communities as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, we ask that as Congress confronts the challenges of unauthorized immigration, it not lose sight of one of its core duties: protecting the family unit as the fundamental institution upon which society and government itself depends. USCCB believes that in the course of enforcing U.S. immigration laws in the workplace, ICE should abandon, not augment or extend, worksite enforcement raids.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee today. The U.S. Catholic Bishops believe that immigrants should come to the United States lawfully, but we also understand that the current immigration legal framework does not adequately reunify families and is non-responsive to our country's need for labor.

Immigration enforcement raids demonstrate in a highly visible way the ability of the government to enforce the law. They accomplish little, however, in the attempt to solve the broader challenge of unauthorized migration, while they render devastated thousands of families and their communities across the United States.

We urge Congress to resist engaging in a piecemeal and enforcement-only approach to the complex issue of unauthorized migration, and instead pass immigration reform laws which ensure the rule of law in the United States, while simultaneously ensuring that the laws are rooted in the reunification of family, responsive to our economy's demand for labor, and respectful of the humanity of the immigrants in our midst.

Thank you for your consideration of our views

¹ Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope. A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, January 23, 2003, No. 78.

² Id. at No. 38.

³ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, US Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2010), 1, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/126.pdf>.

⁴ Rakesh Kochhar, C. Soledad Espinoza, and Rebecca Hinze-Pifer, After the Great Recession: Foreign Born Gain Jobs; Native Born Lose Jobs (Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, 2010), 4-5, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/129.pdf>.

⁵ Passel and Cohn, U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade, 1.

⁶ See, e.g., Gordon H. Hanson, The Economics and Policy of Illegal Immigration in the United States, Migration Policy Institute (December 2009).

⁷ Id. at 6.

⁸ Passel and Cohn, U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Flows Are Down Sharply Since Mid-Decade, iii.

⁹ Hanson, The Economics and Policy of Illegal Immigration in the United States at 6.

¹⁰ Estimate of INS, DHS budgets 2000-2010.

¹¹ Act of June 27, 1952, ch. 477, as amended.

¹² Id.

CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS, A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW**Introduction**

Since 1990, immigrant families and their children have taken an increasingly prominent role in American life. Not only has there been a notable growth in the number of children of immigrants living in the United States, but where they and their family live has begun to shift in the past two decades. The children of immigrants also pose unique challenges. Some have parents who live in unauthorized status and at constant risk of detention and deportation. While their parents remain at risk, a significant number of the children themselves are U.S. citizens; the Hispanic Pew Forum has noted that nearly four-fifths of children in this situation fall into this category (“Unauthorized Immigrants and Their U.S.-Born Children”). Given the transitional status of first generation immigrant communities (regardless of status), it is perhaps not surprising that many of these families tend to be less economically established than natives, and thus experience the stresses and strains of economic instability. While instability poses its own problems, it does not necessarily mean that immigrants are themselves more likely to take advantage of the system and use social services to a degree disproportionate to their population. Quite the opposite is actually true. Language barriers are also a concern, as children of immigrants often live with parents and other family members who are not proficient in English. In the following section we hope to address some of these questions provide some overarching answers and observations related to them.

Demographics and Integration

Children of immigrants are a growing population in the United States; their share has increased from 13% in 1990 to 23% in 2008, with most growth in the number of U.S. children during this period coming from children of immigrants. The Urban Institute reported that “the number of children in native families increased by 2.1 million, while the number of children with at least one immigrant parent grew by 8.1 million, accounting for 77% of the increase in children in the United States.” (Fortuny, “State Trends”) Overall, this population tends to live in families that are disproportionately poor, with 21% existing below the poverty level (and 49% living in low income families) as opposed to 15% of children of natives who live below the poverty level (35% of children of native born live in low income families). Nevertheless, while living in poorer economic conditions on the whole, children of immigrants are less likely than children of natives to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the food stamp program—15% and 18% respectively) and less likely than children of native families to receive welfare (4% and 5% respectively).

Traditionally, immigrants tended to settle in predictable destination states throughout the country: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois and New Jersey. They still remain heavily concentrated in these areas but their share has fallen from 73% in 1990 to 65% in 2008. This is due to the fact that immigrants have begun to move to non-traditional sites, including North Carolina, Nevada, and Georgia. The numbers of children of immigrants living in these states has, since 1990, increased by 508%, 454%, and 444% respectively. (Fortuny, “State Trends Update”) The settlement of immigrants in non-traditional states in all likelihood accounts for some of the strong reaction against immigrants that has arisen in recent years. For this reason, efforts aimed at integration will function as an important vehicle for the acceptance of migrants and their children in new communities across the nation. The Catholic Church recognizes the importance of immigrant integration and seeks to play an important role in this process (See Box 1).

An important step in the integration process is in the acquisition of the English language, which carries with it obvious benefits, including the ability to more effectively communicate with the wider community. A recent analysis produced by the Urban Institute which focused on the acquisition of English language proficiency among the children of migrants demonstrated the remarkable capacity for English language learning even when their parents may not be well versed in the language.

More than half of young children of immigrants (ages 0 - 8) have at least one English language learning parent (Fortuny, "Young Children of Immigrants"). However, within this first generation and by age fifteen a notable number of children of immigrants are either bilingual or English only speakers (See Chart 1, next page). The report notes that 63% of children of migrants at age five are categorized as either bilingual or English and 37% are English language learners. By ages 13-15, 87% of this population are either bilingual or English language learners and only 13% are English language learners (English language learners include people who can speak English well, not well, or not at all).

Children of Immigrants, Parental deportation, and the Problem of Family Unity

In terms of family structure, children of immigrants between ages 0-8 are more likely than native born children to live in two parent households—84% vs. 71%—with more than 90% of children of immigrant parents of either Asian or European origin living in two parent families. (Fortuny, "Young Children of Immigrants") Approximately half of all unauthorized immigrant households include couples with children, the overwhelming majority of whom are U.S. citizens: 79% ("Unauthorized Immigrants and Their U.S.-Born Children"). The Urban Institute reports that some 93% of children of immigrants under 9 years old are U.S. citizens. Slightly more than half of these children have at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen and 43% live in mixed status families, which included parents who are legal permanent residents, refugees, or unauthorized immigrants ("Young Children of Immigrants"). The varied status of parents of citizen children obviously brings with it certain risks such as the potential deportation of a parent who is apprehended and detained for being here illegally.

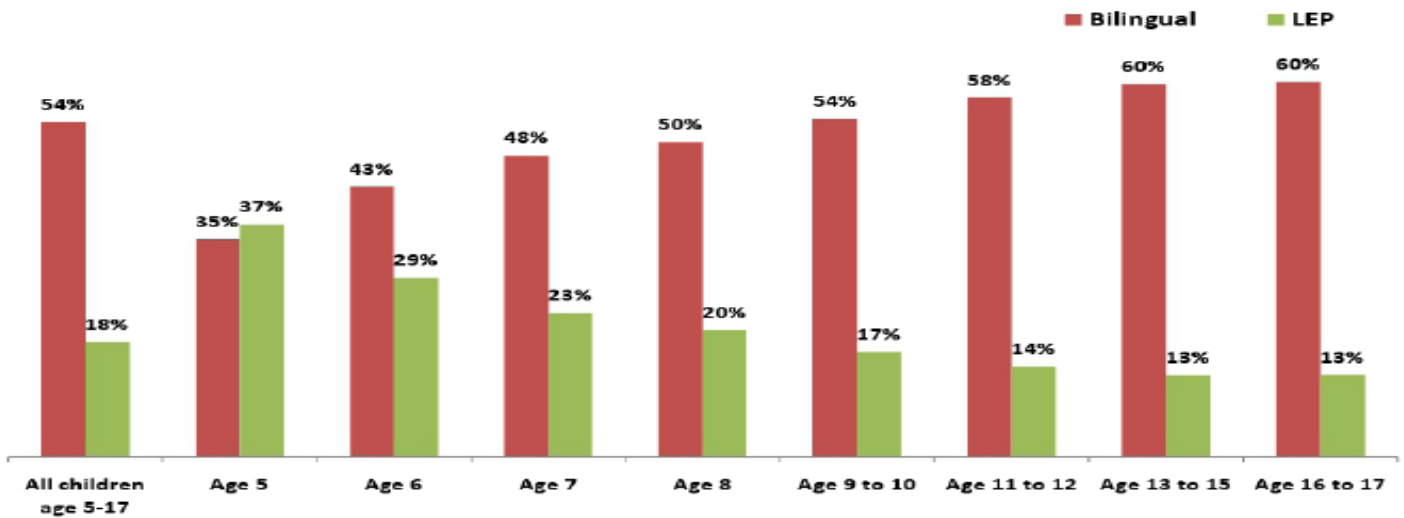
According to a recent study produced by the Department of Homeland Security, titled "Removals Involving Illegal Alien Parents of United States Citizens," a significant number of parents of citizen children have been removed through deportation proceedings in recent years. Between 1998 and 2007, 2,199,138 alien removals occurred. During this period there was a notable upward trend in the number of deportations: 174,813 alien removals (in total) were reported in fiscal year 1998 and 319,382 in 2007; this entire period includes 108,434 removals involving alien parents of US citizen children. ICE officials noted that this might actually represent an undercount involving alien parents of US citizen children because parents may not provide the information and sometimes provide misleading information. Further, these numbers do not include voluntary departures without an order of removal, "such as Mexican nationals returned to Mexico by the border patrol."

Contrary to what is implied in the title of the report, removals include parents who came here illegally and parents who were here legally and whose immigration status was revoked due to some offense. During this period, 68,179 were listed as removed given their preexisting unauthorized status and 63,510 were removed as a result of a criminal violation. Other reasons for removal included attempted entry without proper documentation or because of

Box 1: Pope Benedict XVI's emphasized the importance of this process in his 2010 migration day message when he wrote, with specific reference children, how important it is that these "these young people be given the possibility of attending school and subsequently of being integrated into the world of work, and that their social integration be facilitated by appropriate educational and social structures."

To this end the Catholic bishops of the United States have, through both the USCCB and related institutions, sought assist in this process. In their statement Strangers No Longer, the bishops called on local parishes to reach out to intentionally assist in the integration of migrants into their communities, both through work in their parishes and in their local communities. Through their Citizenship and Integration project, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network provides assistance and funding to four local affiliate agencies to establish new programs in English as a Second Language (ESL) citizenship education and or naturalization application assistance (<http://cliniclegal.org/citizenship-and-integration-national-capacity-building-project>). Pope John Paul II emphasized the importance of integration of migrant communities. In his 2004 migration day message, he wrote that "if the gradual integration of all immigrants is fostered with respect for their identity and, at the same time, safeguarding the cultural patrimony of the peoples who receive them, there is less of a risk that they will come together to form real 'ghettos'," and thus alienated from their new homeland.

Chart 1: Shares of Children of Immigrants Age 5-17 That Are Bilingual and English Language Learners 2007-2008



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 2007 and 2008 American Community Survey
 Note: English language learners reported that they speak a language other than English at home and speak English well, not well, or not at all. English-fluent persons speak English exclusively or very well. Those who speak another language at home and speak English very well are classified as bilingual and English fluent. English fluency is not recorded for children under age 5.

fraud, because they became a public charge and still others due to health reasons.

Final Charge Category Per Removal

Final Charge Category	Removals
Present w/o authorization	68,179
Criminal violations	63,510
Previously removed, ineligible for reentry	25,604
Attempted entry without proper documents or through fraud	20,340
Public charge	1,118
Smuggling or aiding illegal	725
Failed to maintain status	664
Other	313
National security grounds	13
Total Parent Removals	180,466

Source: DHS Report: "Removals Involving Illegal Alien Parents of United States Citizens,"

A second study produced by the UC/Berkeley, which used DHS security data, focused on the children who were affected by parental removals rather than on the parents themselves. The authors estimated that between 1997 and 2008, more than 100,000 children were affected by the deportation of a Lawful Permanent Resident parent(s) (LPR), at least 88,000 of these children were citizens, and 44,000 were under the age of 5 at the time of their parent(s) deportation ("In the

Children's Best Interest?").

Changes in immigration law since the mid-nineties have played a contributory role in the deportation of LPRs, as more restrictive legislation was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President Clinton. This legislation included the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. While limits on space prohibit any in-depth discussion here, these two pieces of legislation placed new restrictions on LPRs convicted of crimes and in doing so broadened "the category of crimes designated as aggravated felonies to encompass a broad range of minor and non-violent crimes" ("In the Child's Best Interest?"). Furthermore, as a result of having committed an aggravated crime LPRs were subject to mandatory deportation and were no longer entitled to a hearing before an immigration judge who could, after balancing the contributions and offences of the offending LPR, forego deportation proceedings. A somewhat lengthy quote from the Department of Homeland Security Study summarizes the effect of these changes nicely:

"In 1996, Congress adopted the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The

1996 laws changed the guidelines for removing noncitizens with criminal convictions. The laws expanded the list of aggravated felonies, crimes for which one offense makes an alien removable, by adding many types of crimes and lowering the threshold for other crimes to qualify as aggravated felonies. In addition to murder and drug or firearms trafficking, aggravated felonies now include all crimes of violence or theft when the term of imprisonment is a year or more, as well as numerous other crimes. If removed, aggravated felons are permanently barred from reentering the United States unless the Attorney General provides permission for reentry.”

While the bishops have consistently reaffirmed the rule of law they have also emphasized the importance of ensuring due process, such that the rights of migrants can be protected and that all the factors of a situations can be weighed before deportation proceeding are initiated. In their pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer*, the bishops called on Congress to revisit this legislation given concerns that it undercut due process and unjustly broke up families. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security and International Law, then Bishop Thomas Wenski reiterated this concern when he urged "the committee to re-examine the changes made by the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which eviscerated due process protections for immigrants. We urge you to restore judicial discretion in removal proceedings so that families are not unnecessarily divided."

Select Sources:

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* The Pew Hispanic Forum, “Unauthorized Immigrants and Their U.S.-Born Children,” August 2010, (<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=125>)

* The Urban Institute, "Young Children of Immigrants: The Leading Edge of America's Future," August 2010, <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412203-young-children.pdf>

* The Urban Institute, "Children of Immigrants: 2008 State Trends Update, September 2010,

* The Urban Institute, "Children of Immigrants: Economic Well Being," November 2010,

CONFRONTING FRAUD? AFRICAN REFUGEE ADMISSIONS, FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND THE DEBATE OVER DNA TESTING

Each year the President of the United States is required to submit a report to Congress that focuses on the refugee situation internationally and a list of proposed ceilings", which help to guide the number of refugee admissions allotted for various regions in the world in a given year. Also included is a general overview of the conditions of the countries from which they are likely to come and an analysis of some of the demographic information related to the resettlement of refugees the previous year and the costs associated with it. The proposed ceilings for FY 2010 and their projected arrivals at the time of this report and the suggested ceiling levels for FY2011 are listed in Chart 1 below. Those individuals who are considered to be "of special humanitarian concern," and are thus eligible for resettlement into the United States is determined through the U.S. Refugee Admissions priority system, which is broken down into three categories:

- **Priority 1:** This category applies to individuals of any nationality in any location who, typically, have compelling protection needs and for whom resettlement appears to be the appropriate durable solution. Such individuals are referred by UNHCR, a US Embassy, or specified non-governmental organizations.

- **Priority 2:** This category includes specific groups identified by the Department of State and in consultation with DHS/USCIS, UNHCR, NGO's as in need of resettlement. The process through which it is determined whether a specific group qualifies "includes whether the group is of special humanitarian concern and whether members of the group will likely be able to qualify for admission as refugees under U.S. law." Historically, groups designated under this category have included Jews and Christians in what was the Soviet Union, human rights activists and former political prisoners in Cuba, and certain ethnic minorities from Burma in Malaysia.

- **Priority 3:** This category focuses on members of "designated nationalities and who have immediate family members in the United States who initially entered the United States as refugees or who were granted asylum. Traditionally spouses, children under the age of 21 and parents have qualified for this admission priority. The populations served under this category have in recent years included, for example, people from Bhutan, Burma, Iran, and Iraq. Chad and the Republic of Congo were new additions to the list for FY 2011.

Concerns Emerge Over Priority Three Admissions

The Priority 3 category for refugee resettlement was

Region	Chart 1: Refugee Admissions in FY2010, Proposed Refugee Admissions by Region for FY2011		
	FY 2010 Ceiling	FY 2010 Projected Arrivals	Proposed FY2011 Ceiling
Africa	15,500	13,500	15,000
East Asia	17,000	17,500	19,000
Europe and Central Asia	2,500	1,500	2,000
Latin America/Caribbean	5,000	5,000	5,500
Near East/South Asia	35,000	37,000	35,500
Regional Subtotal	75,000	74,500	77,000

Source: Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2011

created with the purpose of reuniting designated nationalities with family members in the United States who were themselves resettled here as refugees or admitted as asylees. In recent years, some government officials in the State Department expressed concern over the possibility of extensive fraud in this element of admissions program; there was the worry that people were representing themselves as an immediate family member with someone here in the U.S, but were in fact not.

In response, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security/ U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Services, launched a pilot program to explore the extent to which fraud might be a factor in Priority 3 admissions. The first phase of the program sampled 500 refugees in Nairobi, Kenya (who primarily hailed from either Somalia or Ethiopia), and sought to test the legitimacy of claimed family relations via the use of DNA testing. The geographic focus was due primarily to the fact that in recent years the greater majority of Priority 3 arrivals originated in Africa. A fact sheet distributed by the Department of State in February 2009 claimed that during the DNA trial testing phase, they were only able to confirm "biological relationships in fewer than 20% of cases (family units). In the remaining cases, at least one negative result (fraudulent relationship) was identified, or the individuals refused to be tested." (<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/115891.htm>). Given the results of the pilot, PRM halted processing Priority 3 applications, first in Kenya and Ethiopia in March 2008 and a few months later all together (Oct. 22, 2008). The cessation of the program was intended to be temporary, until officials could create new guidelines and in the process provide safeguards against fraudulent activity. As of this moment, the State Department has still not issued new guidelines that will affect the Priority 3 admissions process and thus it still remains in limbo.

In Fall 2010, the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) published a report that examined the status of DNA testing as it relates to African Refugees and their family members, with a particular interest in PRM's decision to halt the process while procedures guiding it were under review. Given the significant number of African refugees who were affected by this program, its temporary cessation has had a notable affect on the admission of, in particular, refugee populations hailing out of Africa.



Sudanese refugees in Chad who have fled escalating conflict in western Sudan's Darfur region.

Photo Credit: Kevin Hartigan/CRS

African refugees have in recent years accounted for 95% of admissions under the Priority 3 category and have generally not been as nearly well represented in the Priority 1 and 2 admissions categories.

The IPC report notes, for example, that "between 1990 and 2008, only 4% of Priority 2 arrivals were from Africa, while 60% were from Europe." It further adds that from 1989-2003, refugees from Europe were the origin region for the largest number of refugee admissions into the United States. In the decade preceding 1989, the largest number of refugees came from Southeast Asia, primarily due to the fall of Saigon and the troubles that emerged in Cambodia and Laos. From 2004 – 2007 these trends shifted, such that Africa became the region from which the largest numbers of refugees came into the United States. After 2007 admissions from Africa again began to drop.

This abrupt turnaround was partly due to the suspension of the Priority 3 program and in part to the lowering of the total admission ceiling set aside for African refugees. As seen in Chart 1 above, the ceiling for 2011 was 15,000, which is lower than the ceiling given for FY2010 (15,500). In fact, 2011 ceiling is "almost 25% lower than the average for the previous decade" ("An Assessment of DNA Testing").

It should be emphasized, at least as an aside, that the lowering of the admission ceiling for refugees of Afri

can origin in no way reflects a decrease in the need for resettlement of these populations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that, although the total number of refugees in Africa has decreased since 2000 (from about 3.4 to 2 million), the declining trend has slowed. Regardless, UNHCR admits to having as many as 10.2 million people of concern to it in Sub Saharan Africa (<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d7fd6.html>).

The use of genetic testing as the mechanism to determine family relations and the consequential emphasis on strictly biological relationships as the exclusive standard for reunification brings with it potential problems. While agreeing that efforts should be made to stop fraud in the refugee resettlement process, the USCCB expressed concern about the ramifications of this process on family unity ("Refugee Protection in the US"). In African conflict zones the definition of family often extends beyond blood relatives, with families raising orphaned or abandoned children. Given that they are not a blood relation, DNA testing will not function as an adequate determinant for familial relations. Seyoum Berhe, who was quoted in a Washington Post article as an official of refugee services of the Catholic Archdiocese of Arlington, reflected on this broader perspective. He noted that "A village is burning. People are running. Someone grabs a child and ends up raising him. The DNA may not be the same, but in every other way, he is the parent... we certainly do not support fraud, but there is a human aspect, too. If my brother were killed in Somalia and I saved his child, according to our culture, that child is mine." (Pamela Constable, "Torn Asunder in War and then Peace," WaPo, 12/11/2008, B1).

The Catholic Church in the United States is not alone in their concerns surrounding the consequences of these types of programs. The General Secretary of the International Catholic Migration Commission, Johannes Kettelers, during a meeting for the International Organization for Migration argued that DNA testing may only reinforce family separation and, in effect, function as a de-unification strategy in this regard. This tendency could pose a serious, long term problem given that, while "respect for families is itself a value and the right to family unity fundamental, experience and research also demonstrates that family unity is a cornerstone of social stability, in countries both of destination and of

origin" (<http://www.icmc.net/activities/unmixing-migration-fill-gaps-protection>).

Two other concerns of the Catholic Bishops of the United States related to this issue are worthy of note. First, the bishops expressed concern that individuals who do not report for their interviews are being counted as fraudulent applicants, a fact which significantly skews the data. This and other methodological concerns were expressed by the IPC report in greater detail. A Second, it appears as though the U.S. Department of State is planning to place the burden of the costs of these tests on the refugees. In the meantime, thousands of refugee family reunification cases have been put on hold while refugees, even those who are willing to do the DNA tests, await in a precarious situations, uncertain of their fate (http://www.usccb.org/mrs/Refugee_Protection_1108.pdf).

Sources

* *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2011: Report to Congress*, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/148671.pdf>

* Immigration Policy Center, "An Assessment of DNA Testing for African Refugees," October 2010, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/assessment-dna-testing-african-refugees>

* Migration and Refugee Services/USCCB, *Refugee Protection in the US: Time to Renew Our Commitment*, http://www.usccb.org/mrs/Refugee_Protection_1108.pdf

The trafficking of human beings "constitutes a shocking offense against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. In particular, the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade, and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and human rights."

-John Paul II

Letter to Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran

THE TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT OF 2000 TO THE PRESENT

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 provides the United States with a framework for prevention of the crime, prosecution of the traffickers, and protection of the victims. The ten year anniversary of the passing of this landmark legislation provides USCCB an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned and potential opportunities in the realm of victim services based on its unique role as a national victim services provider and its extensive experience in the areas of education, service and advocacy.

For nearly a decade, the USCCB has played a leading role in advocacy, education and in service provision on behalf of trafficking survivors. From 2001-2006 the Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHS/ORR) gave discretionary grants to 28 organizations for the purpose of providing assistance to survivors of human trafficking and awareness raising of the issue through media and public education.

In 2006 HHS/ORR switched from the provision of discretionary grants to a per capita contract that was awarded to the USCCB. As a national contractor, the USCCB has the benefit of bringing a "bird's eye view" to this issue and, in doing so, provides us with the flexibility to respond more effectively to areas that are underserved and regions where new needs arise. As a result, the USCCB now has the capacity to provide trafficking victims services in 43 states and 3 U.S. territories. During this nearly four year period, from April 2006 to August 2010, USCCB subcontractors served 1,781 survivors of trafficking, including 53 children, and 418 eligible family members. Another benefit to HHS' contract with the USCCB is that it provides an effective mechanism for data collection on the topic of human trafficking. One of the serious difficulties confronting

those who are in the fight against human trafficking is the dearth of reliable statistical evidence that will help to frame the extent of the problem. International, estimates vary widely. According to the U.S. State Department, estimates range from 4 - 27 million people who are living slaves worldwide today (<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/105376.htm>).

As of their 2010 *Trafficking in Persons* Report (TIP), the State Department an estimate of 12.3 million people forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world. For a copy of the newest TIP report, published in summer 2010, please visit <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/index.htm>.

While the USCCB has a domestic focus, their ability to collect information on the clients that they serve based on gender, age, type of slavery, etc. So, for example, from April 2006 - August 2010, 1781 clients were enrolled with 57% female and 43% male (only 3% were minors). During this same period, 73% of these cases were related to labor trafficking, 19.5% to sex trafficking and 8.5% to both forms. This sort of data will help researchers isolate gaps in care, better determine the needs of trafficking survivors, and provide important information for the development of programming and legislation. From 2002 to the present, the USCCB has helped to serve 2,578 victims of trafficking and their eligible family members. In 2010

For a copy of the newly released report issued by the Department of Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB that details the role that the organization has played in relation to the provision of services, and other information related to MRS' activities, please contact Todd Scribner at TScribner@usccb.org.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT: CONFERENCE

*Immigration and the Church: Pastoral,
Policy, and Social Perspectives*

March 21, 2011
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Caldwell Hall, The Catholic University of America
620 Michigan Avenue
Washington, DC 20064

Please join us for a Conference at Catholic University of America in Washington DC titled "Immigration and the Church: Pastoral, Policy and Social Perspectives." This one day conference will focus upon how immigration has impacted the Church in the U.S. and how it may shape it in the future. It also will examine the underlying church teaching on immigration and the Church's role in the current national immigration debate. Panels will focus on the history of immigration and the Church and future trends; Catholic Social teaching on immigration and its impact on the public policy positions of the U.S. bishops; and how Catholics and others view the role of the Church in the public debate on this issue. For more information please email Todd Scribner at Tscribner@uscbb.org.

RESOURCES: WEBSITE AND PUBLICATIONS

* The Catholic Bishops and Immigration Education Website
<http://archives.lib.cua.edu/education/immigration/immigration-wel.cfm>

Since the beginnings of our nation, immigration and religion have served as two of the most powerful factors in the shaping of American identity. This website examines the role of the American Catholic Church in the debates over immigration policies that restricted entry into the U.S. based on ethnic background. Throughout the twentieth century, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and its forerunner, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, have fought for fairer laws and greater justice for immigrants. The documents presented in this site explore the changing perceptions on immigration in the twentieth century, as well as the Church's involvement in shaping immigration policy.

* Kevin Appleby, "Reform Promotes National

Sovereignty," National Catholic Register (June 28, 2010),

http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/immigration_sharing_americas_blessings_part_2_of_a_register_special_report

This essay looks at the positive connection between passage of comprehensive immigration reform and national sovereignty/strength.

* Todd Scribner, "Negotiating Priorities: The National Catholic Welfare Conference and U.S. Migration Policy in a Post-World War II World, 1948-1952," *American Catholic Studies* 121, no. 4 (Winter 2010)

Abstract: Following World War II Congress engaged in a series of high profile debates on the problem of displaced persons in Europe and domestic immigration policy. To date, very little has been written on the National Catholic Welfare Conference's involvement in these discussions. This essay constitutes a first step in addressing this oversight and does so by focusing on the well developed and multilayered strategy that the bishops constructed to influence the development of migration policy following the Second World War. During this period the bishops struggled with the problem of displaced persons in Europe and sought to secure emergency legislation that would aid in the resettlement of these vulnerable populations. Their efforts were hampered by the fact that these debates were set within the context of a restrictive American immigration policy that was itself under discussion around the same time. In addition to emergency legislation, they advocated for the liberalization of these restrictive measures. Given the political realities of the day, the bishops were at times forced to engage in pragmatic considerations as to which priorities were most likely to be realized and which were not. These considerations helped to form the framework around which their advocacy efforts occurred.

* Todd Scribner, "Book Review: Climate Refugees," National Catholic Reporter, <http://ncronline.org/node/20839>

* Todd Scribner, "In Everyone's Best Interest?" National Catholic Register (June 28, 2010), http://www.ncregister.com/site/article/immigration_sharing_americas_blessings_part_2_of_a_register_special_report

This short essay examines the interconnection between Catholic social teaching, international development, and immigration.

* Daniel Sturm, USCCB/MRS "POWR Post"

The POWR Post is a monthly e-newsletter sharing success stories of the USCCB/MRS Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees program. For more information about the publication and to get on their email list, please contact Daniel Sturm at Dsturm@usccb.org

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

* Children of the Undocumented: Growing Up Under a Cloud

<http://www.urban.org/events/Children-of-the-undocumented.cfm>

This special forum analyzed demographics related to the children of the undocumented, explored the developmental and educational challenges they face, discussed social and cultural barriers to integration, and debated how public policy and agencies can foster a healthy atmosphere for children living and learning here. An audio recording of the panel presentation can be listened to or downloaded at the above website.

* Sojourners, "REEL Images of Immigration Reform: A Film Guide to Discussing Faith and Immigration"

<http://faithandimmigration.org/sites/default/files/tmp/REEL%20Images%20of%20Immigration.pdf>

Sojourners, in coordination with the organization Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform recently put out a publication that highlights a list of films on immigration that might be useful as a guide for small discussion groups. All of these movies provide a slightly different perspective on the immigration debate that can help to spark conversation. The document also includes suggestions regarding hosting a film, the types of questions you ought to ask during the discussion section, and what issues to look out for.

* International Organization for Migration, "Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey."

http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/books/data_res_human.pdf Although somewhat dated, this publication a pretty comprehensive resource that discusses the existing data and research related to human trafficking, pre-2005. It also includes essays explaining some of the methodological difficulties confronting researchers who are trying to come to terms with the extent of the problem of human trafficking, both domestically and abroad. This is an important task because, as noted by the books editors, "one of the most challenging problems facing researchers is the fact that most of the populations relevant to the study of human trafficking, such as victims/survivors of trafficking for sexual exploitation, traffickers, or illegal migrants are part of a "hidden population", i.e. it is almost impossible to establish a sampling frame and draw a representative sample of the population."

Debunking the Myths

MYTH: Immigrants increase the Crime Rate

FACT: Recent research has shown that immigrant communities do not increase the crime rate and that newly arriving immigrants tend to commit fewer crimes than native born Americans. Ruben Rumbaut, a professor of sociology at Brandeis University, found that "even as the undocumented population has doubled to 12 million since 1994, the violent crime rate in the United States has declined 34.2 percent and the property crime rate has fallen 26.4 percent." Cities where there are high levels of immigrants, such as New York, Chicago and Miami experienced declines in violent crime during this period. Other cities with numerous immigrants, such as El Paso and Laredo, are among the country's safest cities to live in.

(Sources: Immigration Policy Center, "Immigrants and Crime: Are They Connected," December, 2007, <http://www.aifl.org/ipc/factchecks/Crime-FactCheck10-16-07.pdf>; Ruben Rumbaut and Walter Ewing, *The Myth of Immigrant Criminality and the Paradox of Assimilation* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Law Foundation, 2007); Radley Balko, "The El Paso Miracle," ReasonOnline, July 6, 2009, <http://www.reason.com/news/show/134579.html>)

APPENDIX 1: BISHOPS' STATEMENTS

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



**National Migration Week Statement of Francis Cardinal George, OMI
January 2 – 8, 2011**

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you." (Isaiah 60:1) These words from the first reading on this Feast of the Epiphany elicit joy in all of us as we welcome Jesus Christ more deeply into our hearts in this holy season and claim Him as a Guiding Light to our world. That same joy compels us to allow Christ to work through each and all of us to bring the Good News of salvation to everyone whom Christ places in our daily path and to those in need who cross the borders of our consciousness, including those who migrate to this country and other lands, seeking a means to support their families.

As we enter this new year, there are still many people who find themselves unwelcome, many who have migrated to this country, fleeing a poverty or oppression that has made it impossible for them to provide adequately for their families in their homeland. Like the Magi in today's Gospel, migrant families seeking to support themselves and their families have followed the star of hope to seek the source of love and welcome, Who invites them to draw deeply from his love in order to live as his children and contribute to society.

Migrants and immigrants who have entered our country without proper documents live in the shadows every day fearing the possibility of deportation, of being separated from their spouses and their children. Yet while most welcome the economic benefits of their cheap labor, many condemn them for being here.

As people of faith, people who claim Christ as our light, we are called, like the Magi, to bring our gifts to bear to help the vulnerable among us. Like the Magi, we are called to seek direction and information that will lead us to the truth found only in Jesus Christ. Like the Magi, we are called through our encounters with Christ in the Word, in the Eucharist and in each other to go forth, transformed by our encounters, to bring the Good News that transforms the world.

As we celebrate this Feast of Epiphany, the celebration of God's manifestation to the entire world, I ask Catholics to prayerfully do the following:

- Hold all immigrants in your prayers. Pray as well for our legislators to enact laws that respect the dignity of immigrants and all who are in need in our society.
- Reflect on your own family's history of immigration.
- Reflect in your faith community about your ministry of welcoming, not only in welcoming people into Mass on Sunday, but in welcoming the stranger, especially the poor, into the consciousness and outreach of your faith community.
- Gather to dialogue about the reasons for so much current movement of peoples across the globe; about the need for all countries to develop so that their citizens can find work at home; about the history of immigration laws and the breakdown of those laws; about the positive economic impact of immigrants to our society. More information about the issue of migration and immigration is available on the US Catholic Bishops' Conference website, www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

As people of faith, we are called to shine Christ's light upon the laws, systems and individuals that keep many of our brothers and sisters in the shadows. May 2011 be a year of blessing for everyone. May we reflect in our words and actions the Good News found in Jesus Christ, a Light to the Nations a Light to guide our way to build a world where all are treated with the dignity and respect due all of us as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.



Florida Bishops Statement on Immigration

January 1, 2011

“When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord am your God.”

Leviticus 19: 33 – 3

We, the Catholic bishops of Florida, are deeply concerned with our nation’s flawed immigration system and its impact on the human dignity and lives of our migrant brothers and sisters. This system divides families and causes human suffering to those who search for work in support of their families.

In Florida, our economy is dependent upon manual labor for agriculture, construction and the service industry. Limited numbers of worker visas are available to bring unskilled labor into the U.S. for jobs but too often, demand exceeds need. This has created a market for undocumented workers who may face abuses such as inadequate wages, substandard housing and no benefits with a real threat of exploitation by unscrupulous employers, human smugglers and human traffickers. While the Catholic Church does not advocate for undocumented immigration into the United States, it respects the dignity of the human person and the right to work to meet the basic needs of their families.

The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2241).

The failure of the United States Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform leaves migrants in search of work without legal protection and vulnerable to mistreatment. At the same time, our State and nation benefits from their work and their taxes, creating a permanent underclass with no rights in our society. In his 1981 encyclical letter, *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II expressed that care should be taken to prevent the exploitation of those who must emigrate in order to find work. Furthermore, just legislation must ensure the same criteria apply to immigrant workers as other workers in society. As a moral matter, we cannot accept the toil and taxes of these human beings without offering them the protections of our laws. This is not the American way.

We also have grave concerns about the impact of this flawed system on family unity. Families are the building blocks for society and the place where children are nourished and protected. Too often, backlogs and visa quotas for countries prevent immigrant citizens and legal permanent residents from bringing spouses, parents and minor children from overseas, a wait for some approaching 20 years. The U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants are at significant risk if parents are incarcerated and scheduled for deportation.

Our humanitarian concerns with the broken immigration system do not conflict with, but complement the right of the sovereign nation to control its borders. By repairing the system comprehensively, and providing legal means for entry, the nation would replace illegality with legality so that individuals and families could migrate and work in a safe and controlled manner. This would not only protect the rights of the migrant, but also help ensure national security, as law enforcement would be able to focus on those who come to our country to harm us.

The Church recognizes the right of a sovereign state to control its borders in furtherance of the common good. It also

recognizes the right of persons to migrate so that they can realize their God-given rights. These teachings complement each other. While the sovereign state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated. (Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope, a joint pastoral statement composed by the Bishops of Mexico and the United States.)

While we support the right of the sovereign nation to control its borders, this does not mean that it should be done in a manner that undermines basic human rights. The vast majority of immigrants to this nation are not criminals, which should be taken into account in any enforcement strategy. The recent increases in deportation and the sometimes inhumane treatment of detainees such as refusal to allow contact with families and no legal representation causes us to question the methods used against those already in fear for their lives. Immigration law is complicated and only trained professionals have current knowledge of the laws, not local law enforcement.

Any passing of laws that give legal sanction to profiling people will decrease public safety and discourage reporting of crime. The so-called “illegal” are so, not because they wish to defy the law, but because the law does not provide them with any channels to regularize their status in our country which needs their labor. They are not so much breaking the law, as being broken by the law.

Instead of passing local and state laws which cause fear in immigrant communities, Congress must bring these persons out of the shadows so they can fully contribute their talents to our nation. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has consistently advocated for “a path to citizenship” meaning those who are already present and contributing to society could come forward and pay a fine, undergo a comprehensive criminal background check, show they have paid taxes, are learning English and obtain a visa that would lead to permanent residency. Immigration is a federal issue and there must be a federal solution rather than the attempts to craft varying proposals in several states including Florida.

We call upon our federal delegation to lead the fight for comprehensive immigration reform in Congress. We call upon the Florida legislature to resist efforts to demonize those who provide the labor for our economy and a living for their families. Our Catholic Social Teaching and the tradition of the Church affirm the dignity of every human being, made in the image of God.

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito
Diocese of Palm Beach

Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Frank J. Dewane
Diocese of Venice

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop John G. Noonan
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

APPENDIX 2: RECENT PRESS RELEASES

USCCB News Release

10-243E

December 21, 2010

USCCB Chairman Calls Senate Vote on Dream Act “A Setback, Not a Defeat”

Archbishop Gomez reaffirms Church support for immigrant rights

WASHINGTON (December 21, 2010)—Archbishop Jose Gomez, coadjutor archbishop of Los Angeles and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration, today described the vote on the DREAM Act in the U.S. Senate as a “setback, not a defeat.” The DREAM Act, short for the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors Act, failed to attain the sixty votes needed to end a filibuster on the bill, thus ending its prospects for passage in the 111th Congress. The final vote count was 55 in favor of cloture, 41 against, five short of the needed number.

The DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for young people who entered the country illegally with their parents as children or infants, provided they complete two years of higher education or two years of military service. As many as 1.8 million young persons could have benefited from the enactment of the DREAM Act.

“With the passage of the DREAM Act in the House of Representatives and with a majority of the U.S. Senate voting in favor, it is clear that a majority of Congress and of the American public support this common-sense humanitarian measure,” said Archbishop Gomez. “I am confident that one day—sooner rather than later—the DREAM Act will become the law of the land.”

Archbishop Gomez extended thanks to those in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate who supported the legislation.

“On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I express my gratitude to those elected officials who did the right thing and voted for this important bill,” he stated.

He added, “My heart goes out to the thousands of young people who would have been helped by the DREAM Act and were disappointed by the Senate action. We will continue to work so that one day soon you will have the opportunity to become Americans.”

Archbishop Gomez reaffirmed the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ commitment to safeguarding the basic human rights of immigrants and to enacting humane and just reforms of U.S. immigration law. He added that the U.S. bishops had more work to do to educate Catholics on the issue of immigration and its importance to the mission of the Church and the future of the country.

“The U.S. Catholic bishops will continue to advocate for humane immigration reform, so that we can attain an immigration system that properly balances the need to protect our national sovereignty with our obligation to honor fundamental human rights.”

“More education is needed to ensure that Catholics, as well as all Americans, fully understand the humanitarian consequences of a broken immigration system, especially on families,” he concluded.

USCCB News Release

10-243E
December 16, 2010

USCCB News Release

10-239E
December 16, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
En Español

Migrant Families Focus of 2011 National Migration Week

Addressing root causes of migration key to resolving current migration patterns

WASHINGTON (December 16, 2010) — Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice is the primary theme for the 2011 National Migration Week, to be held January 2-8 in parishes and dioceses around the country.

Following the lead of Pope Benedict XVI, who has focused on migrant families in his 2011 World Day of Migrants and Refugees message, the U.S. Catholic bishops focus this year's National Migration Week message also on the family by highlighting the stresses and strains that migration has on families and the effects that economic underdevelopment has in this process.

“Systemic poverty, economic instability and a lack of viable employment are fundamental, root causes of unregulated migration,” said Archbishop José Gomez, coadjutor archbishop of Los Angeles. “Given the economic inequalities that separate the developed from the developing nations, and the important role that these differences play in migration patterns, the Catholic bishops have repeatedly stressed that an open-door immigration policy is not a solution to the problem of illegal immigration. International economic development is a crucial component in the management of migration patterns.”

Archbishop Gomez, who is chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, stressed the need to work for economic and social development in sending countries so that people won't be forced to migrate in order to sustain or find a better life for their families.

“The bishops of the United States, in their pastoral letter *Strangers No Longer*, called on the United States to work in solidarity with the international community to help raise the standard of living, uphold human rights and implement complementary political institutions in the underdeveloped world so that people can have the chance to prosper in their homelands,” Archbishop Gomez said.

Domestically, other steps can be taken to help regulate illegal immigration, such as Congress developing policies that provide legal avenues of entry for low-skilled workers that better match fluctuations in the marketplace.

The observance of National Migration Week began over a quarter century ago by the bishops to provide Catholics with an opportunity to take stock of the wide diversity in the Church and the ministries serving them. As the face of the local churches continues to change, the availability of materials explaining the plea and celebrating the contributions of immigrants and refugees is becoming increasingly important. They provide an important educational resource that can be used throughout the year by individuals, families, schools and parishes to learn about the complex issues surrounding migration.

In conjunction with The Catholic University of America, USCCB will develop a new educational website that will focus on the important role that the Catholic Church has played in the area of refugee resettlement for nearly seven decades. The site is expected to be operational in the spring and will be hosted at <http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/packets.html> where other resources are already posted. These resources are directed to assist teachers, directors of religious education and others interested in migration and refugee issues.

National Migration Week resources can be downloaded directly from the website <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw/> or can be ordered in bulk through the USCCB Communications office at 1-800-235-8722 or www.usccbpublishing.org (browse under Migration and Refugee Services).

USCCB News Release

10-234

December 10, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

En Español

USCCB Chairman Commends House Passage of Dream Act, Calls on U.S. Senate to Follow Suit

WASHINGTON (December 10, 2010)—Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, coadjutor archbishop of Los Angeles and chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, today commended the House of Representatives for passing the DREAM Act December 8.

"I commend the House of Representatives for their courageous and historic vote to give undocumented young persons a chance to reach their full, God given potential, through the DREAM Act," said Archbishop Gomez. The DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for young persons who were brought to the United States by their parents as children or infants.

Archbishop Gomez called on the U.S. Senate to pass the House bill prior to adjournment for the year.

"We cannot let this moment pass. Our Senators must also pass this important legislation, so that it can be signed into law by the President as soon as possible."

In a procedural vote yesterday, the U.S. Senate voted not to proceed to consideration of the Senate version of DREAM, leaving open the opportunity to vote on the House version next week. If the House bill is adopted by the Senate, it would be sent directly to the President for his signature.

"The DREAM Act would provide thousands of deserving young persons who desire to become Americans a fair opportunity to do so," concluded Archbishop Gomez. "This would not only benefit them, but our country as well. It is the right thing to do, for them and for our nation."

USCCB News Release

10-227

December 3, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

En Español

U.S. Catholic Bishops to Congress: The Dream Act is the ‘Right Thing to Do’

WASHINGTON (December 3, 2010)—In a letter to Congress December 2, Coadjutor Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, called on Congress to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM), calling it “the right thing to do.”

“With the passage of the DREAM Act, we can welcome a new generation of Americans who will one day become leaders of our nation,” wrote Archbishop Gomez.

The DREAM Act would provide a path to citizenship for thousands of young persons without legal status who were brought to the United States as children by their parents. Under the legislation, young people who complete two years of higher education or two years of military service would be eligible for legal permanent residence and eventual citizenship.

“It is important to note that these young persons entered the United States with their parents at a young age, and therefore did not enter without inspection on their own volition. We would all do the same thing in a similar situation,” Archbishop Gomez said. “They have incredible talent and energy and are awaiting a chance to fully contribute their talents to our nation. We would be foolhardy to deny them that chance.”

The USCCB has long supported the DREAM Act, as well as comprehensive reform of the nation’s immigration system.

“There are times when a proposal should be enacted because, simply put, it is the right thing to do. This is one of them,” the Archbishop said. “The DREAM Act represents a practical, fair, and compassionate solution for thousands of young persons who simply want to reach their God-given potential and contribute to the well-being of our nation.”

Full text of the letter follows.

December 2, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to express our support for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). This legislation would make a

difference in the lives of undocumented youth who were brought to the United States by their parents and now, because of their lack of legal status, face obstacles to their future. By removing such barriers, the DREAM Act permits immigrant students to pursue a promising future through college education or military service.

Those who would benefit from the DREAM Act are talented, intelligent, and dedicated young persons who know only the United States as their home. They can become some of the future leaders of our country, provided we are wise enough to provide them the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

Under the DREAM Act, deserving immigrant youth can adjust to permanent resident status provided that they entered the United States before age sixteen, have been physically present in the United States for not less than five years, demonstrated good moral character, have no criminal record and do not threaten national security, and have earned their high school diploma. This bill also offers students a fair opportunity to earn U.S. citizenship if they commit to and complete at least two years of college or two years of honorable service in the military.

Importantly, this legislation will apply to students in both public and private education, including those attending Catholic schools.

It is important to note that these young persons entered the United States with their parents at a young age, and therefore did not enter without inspection on their own volition. We would all do the same thing in a similar situation. The United States is the only country that they know. They have incredible talent and energy and are awaiting a chance to fully contribute their talents to our nation. We would be foolhardy to deny them that chance.

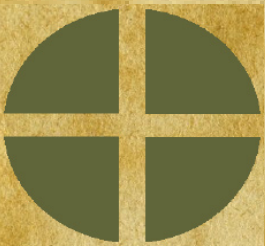
With the passage of the DREAM Act, we can welcome a new generation of Americans who one day will become the leaders of our nation. There are times when a proposal should be enacted because, simply put, it is the right thing to do. This is one of them.

The DREAM Act represents a practical, fair, and compassionate solution for thousands of young persons in our nation who simply want to reach their God-given potential and contribute to the well-being of our nation. I urge you to support this measure and call for its immediate enactment.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez
Coadjutor Archbishop of Los Angeles
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

We hope that this publication will help to keep you informed on issues related to the bishops and to you. In light of this, we ask that you provide any feedback that you think might prove helpful, including suggestions on topics that you want to learn about. To do so, please contact Todd Scribner at TScribner@uscgb.org.



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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Migration and Refugee Services

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