



The Catholic Bishops of Minnesota Statement on Immigration

June 15, 2010

We, the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, again issue an urgent call for comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level. Without national reform, we fear that states will enact legislation that is neither compassionate nor just.

Near the end of the 2010 Minnesota legislative session, legislation modeled after Arizona's new law was introduced in our state's House of Representatives. Unfortunately, such onerous legislation would disrupt our communities, violate the human dignity and rights of undocumented immigrants, and break families apart.

The way we treat immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, is a matter of justice. It reflects our commitment to fairness and decency, our respect for persons and families. It also affects our nation's economic growth and well-being. According to the latest report to the Minnesota Business Immigration Reform Coalition, "the U.S. Council of Economic Advisors estimates that the country's net gain from immigration is \$37 billion per year."

In an April 16, 2008 meeting with the U.S. Catholic Bishops, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, encouraged us to welcome immigrants and "... help them flourish in their new home. This, indeed, is what your fellow countrymen have done for generations. From the beginning, they have opened their doors to the tired, the poor, the 'huddled masses yearning to breathe free.' These are the people whom America has made her own."

In the United States Senate, a framework for immigration reform was proposed in late April, to improve the current, outdated system. Reform is needed now and we urge Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to introduce and enact comprehensive legislation. We have a broken system that must be fixed.

As we indicated in our 2007 and 2008 statements, we support the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' call for comprehensive legislation that would: recognize immigrant family stability and reunification as priorities; insist that worker programs contain protection for U.S. and migrant workers; allow for an earned legalization program, that is realistic and fair, for undocumented persons already in this country; restore due process protections for immigrants; and address the economic, political, and social root causes of migration.

Let us work to build a society that respects, protects and upholds the dignity of all human beings, including newcomers to our state.

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