



Office of the President

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Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President

November 7, 2013

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to you on an issue of great importance and urgency to the nation-immigration reform. We respectfully request that the House of Representatives address the issue as soon as possible, ideally prior to the end of the calendar year. Reports that immigration reform is now delayed in the House are most troubling.

As pastors, we witness each day the human consequences of a broken immigration system. Families are separated through deportation, migrant workers are exploited in the workplace, and migrants die in the desert. In their attempts to respond to these human tragedies, our priests, religious, and social service providers in many cases are unable to help these persons without changes to the law.

To be sure, Church teaching supports the right of sovereign nations to protect their borders. In our view, immigration reform would protect that right and restore the rule of law while upholding the human rights and dignity of the person.

As a moral matter, however, our nation cannot continue to receive the benefits of the work and contributions of undocumented immigrants without extending to them the protection of the law. Studies have demonstrated that undocumented immigrants contribute substantially to our nation's economy, working in industries such as service, construction, and agriculture. Keeping these human beings as a permanent underclass of workers who are unable to assert their rights or enjoy the fruits of their labor is a stain on the soul of the nation.

As we have communicated in the past, we urge you to pass in its final form immigration reform legislation that 1) establishes a fair and achievable path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented in the nation; 2) creates a program that permits future flows of migrant workers to enter safely and legally and with appropriate protections; 3) reaffirms family reunification as the cornerstone of our nation's immigration system and expedites the reunification of families, based on marriage as the union of one man and one woman; 4) restores basic due process protections to immigrants, including protections against unnecessary detention; 5) enhances protections for refugees and asylum-seekers; and 6) examines the root causes of migration, such as poverty and persecution, and adopts policies that address these push factors.

The House has a responsibility to debate and attempt to resolve public policy issues that challenge the nation. The Senate already has passed such a bill, which, although not perfect, improves upon the status quo.

Immigration is a challenge that has confounded our nation for years, with little action from our federally elected officials. It is a matter of great moral urgency that cannot wait any longer for action. The U.S. Catholic bishops stand ready to assist you in this effort.

Thank you for your attention to our views and we look forward to hearing from you regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,

— + *Tim. Card. Dolan*

Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops