



JESUITS®

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The Society of Jesus
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June 4, 2010

Honorable Members of Congress
United States Senate and House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the Provincials of the Society of Jesus in the United States, write to ask that you take immediate action to effect comprehensive immigration reform. Our Roman Catholic religious order sponsors a broad array of works in education, pastoral ministry and social service. Through our ministries, we witness the tragic consequences of our current immigration system. This is not the America that any of us desire. We can and must do better.

Now is the time to enact comprehensive immigration reform because enforcement-only solutions are inadequate. We stand with the Catholic bishops of the United States, through the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, in calling for reform that will embody these essential principles:

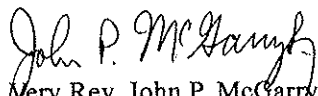
- **A path to legalization that ensures that undocumented immigrants have access to full rights.**
In 1996, the United States Catholic bishops succinctly summarized the failure of our current system: “It is against the common good to have two classes in society: one legal with rights and one illegal without rights.” Immigrants have labored long and hard for our society, contributing to our economic growth. It is time to allow undocumented workers to leave the shadows and enjoy the daylight they have earned by normalizing their immigration status.
- **A legal employment structure for future workers that protects both migrants and United States workers.**
Immigrants, both skilled and unskilled, contribute to the economy by filling labor-gaps that are all too common in certain industries. Creating legal pathways for future workers will ensure that our nation is promoting “authentic” development – development that secures fundamental rights, protects human dignity and respects the human person. Only by creating legal pathways that respond to labor-market realities in the United States can we ensure that there is a safe and economically sustainable migration flow to satisfy the needs of the U.S. economy.
- **Expedited family reunification and emphasis on family unity for all immigrants.**
Keeping families intact is essential to human fulfillment and social stability. Yet, visa backlogs have caused U.S. permanent citizens and legal residents to endure years of separation from close family members. This has often resulted in efforts to bring family members into this country illegally and often at great risk. The current backlog must be addressed and sufficient visas should be made available across the socio-economic spectrum to ensure an orderly reunification of family members in a timely fashion.

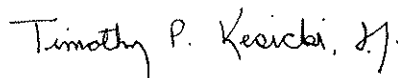
- The need for due process and humane enforcement of our immigration laws.**
 We recognize the right of countries to establish reasonable regulations and laws governing immigration, but we must also affirm that those migrating in seek of work to sustain themselves and their families have a right to be treated justly and humanely. Uniform national standards for all detention facilities must be enacted that include rigorous standards for medical treatment and increased access to pastoral care, legal counsel and legal orientation programs. Those detained should be afforded timely and fair adjudication of their cases. Enforcement efforts must respect the dignity of all persons and every effort should be made to keep families and communities together. This includes making provisions to place those who are detained in facilities within a reasonable proximity to their family members and attorneys.
- Development assistance and fair competition with developing countries.**
 Too many persons today are forced to migrate from their home countries due to the dearth of real economic opportunities sufficient to support individuals and families. We must adopt international development policies, and trade policies, that will foster sustainable economic development in the countries from which migrant flows are the greatest.

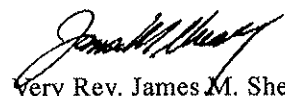
These principles provide the framework for a comprehensive reform of our immigration laws that is fair, just and humane. We have a moral obligation to provide the many men and women who have worked so hard for this country the opportunity to regularize their immigration status and move toward becoming citizens of the United States of America.

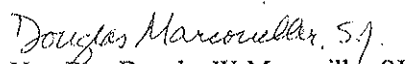
The tide of resistance to real reform will be strong. But it is the right thing to do and now is the time to act. We need your leadership and we commit to working with you to bring about comprehensive immigration reform. The time has come to reform our immigration laws so that this nation will once again shine as a beacon of hope, tolerance and welcome to the world.

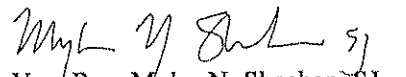
Sincerely,

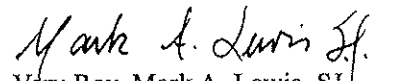

 Very Rev. John P. McGarry, SJ
 Provincial, California Province

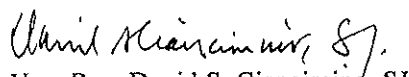

 Very Rev. Timothy P. Kesicki, SJ
 Provincial, Chicago and
 Detroit Provinces



 Very Rev. James M. Shea, SJ
 Provincial, Maryland Province

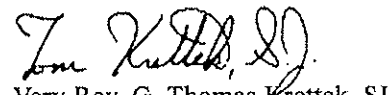

 Very Rev. Douglas W. Marcouiller, SJ
 Provincial, Missouri Province

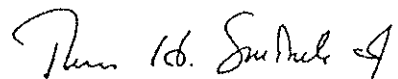

 Very Rev. Myles N. Sheehan, SJ
 Provincial, New England Province


 Very Rev. Mark A. Lewis, SJ
 Provincial, New Orleans Province


 Very Rev. David S. Ciancimino, SJ
 Provincial, New York Province


 Very Rev. Patrick J. Lee, SJ
 Provincial, Oregon Province


 Very Rev. G. Thomas Krettek, SJ
 Provincial, Wisconsin Province


 Very Rev. Thomas H. Smolich, SJ
 President, Jesuit Conference