



ARCHDIOCESE
OF PORTLAND
IN OREGON

*Office of Justice and Peace
Campaign for Human Development
phone 503/233-8361*

March 1, 2006

Dear Pastor or Pastoral Minister;

Lenten greetings from the Archdiocese of Portland and Catholic Charities of Oregon. As we prepare for the coming holy season, I would like to call your attention to unfortunate legislative developments that affect Catholic immigrants here in Oregon. As a pilgrim Church, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of our country of origin. Just as our own ancestors came from all over the world to build this nation, our doors must remain open to those who come today to seek life and fellowship with us. If we do not act now, our brothers and sisters in Christ could face arrests, detentions and expulsion from this country. In this time of Lent when we pause to reflect upon our life of Christian discipleship, we are reminded of the need to welcome the stranger in our midst, because "whatever we did for one of the least brothers of mine" we have also done for Christ (Matthew 25:31-40).

The U.S. Senate is scheduled to consider immigration reform legislation in the coming weeks. This is a critical step in the legislative process in light of the punitive bill passed by the House of Representatives (H.R.4437) in December 2005. Representative DeFazio from Oregon's 4th district voted in favor of H.R.4437, so he will need to be persuaded to change his vote by Catholics in Eugene, Corvallis, Roseburg, and others in the 4th district. Unfortunately, the same forces that led to the anti-immigrant legislation in the House are at work in the Senate. The Senate must be encouraged to pass the comprehensive reforms embodied in the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 (S.1033) introduced by Senators McCain and Kennedy, which has been endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Archbishop Vlazny. Our own Senator Smith of Oregon is uncommitted and could be a critical swing vote as the debate unfolds.

The position of the U.S. Catholic bishops and Archbishop Vlazny is unambiguous and clear, as it is based on Catholic teachings regarding the right to life and the sacredness and dignity of every person. If we are to avoid the passage of legislation that criminalizes undocumented immigrants and those who "assist" them, it is essential that Catholics be engaged in a concerted effort to inform our members of Congress that anything less than the reforms sought by the Church will be unacceptable.

You are receiving this letter because you have the ability to conduct the kinds of mobilization required if we are to achieve success. I appeal to you to use your best efforts to get parishes, faith leaders, and other coalition partners in your area to develop broad-based and robust advocacy directed to the Senate. Representatives from Catholic Charities and the Archdiocese are available to help you with education and advocacy efforts in parishes. Please contact David Carrier from the Archdiocese of Portland's Office of Justice and Peace, or Siovhon Sheridan-Ayala from Catholic Charities, if you would like to arrange parish education and advocacy sessions.

I hope you will also consider arranging constituent visits with members of the House and Senate or their legislative staff. Attached are the Archbishop's letter and documents from the U.S. Catholic bishops that will be useful to you. Please also access the resources on the USCCB website on immigration reform: www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Thank you for your attention and for your commitment to achieving justice for immigrants.

Yours in the peace of Christ,

David Carrier
Office of Justice and Peace
Archdiocese of Portland
503-233-8361

Siovhon Sheridan
Immigration Legal Services
Catholic Charities
503-542-2855 x38

The Honorable Gordon Smith
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

February 17, 2006

Dear Senator Smith:

As the Senate is poised to take up immigration reform proposals soon, I write to encourage you to reject restrictionist and narrow, enforcement-only proposals, in favor of reforms that will comprehensively address our broken immigration system.

The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (S.1033), introduced by Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), provides such a comprehensive approach to solving the problems of the current system. It recognizes that law and border enforcement strategies will only be successful when our laws provide more responsive legal avenues for immigrant workers and those seeking to be with their families.

The current visa process unjustly keeps families often separated for years. In order to promote stronger and stable families more visas need to be made available in a timely and prudent manner. The foundation of society rests first on the family. Our immigration laws must work to ensure that immigrant families are afforded the support and stability they need.

Any serious proposals for reforming our immigration system must also deal with the record number and growing population of people who are here without proper immigration status. Rather than simply granting "amnesty," we should offer an opportunity for these people who have been living in the shadows to come forward and earn the legal means of remaining.

If an individual can demonstrate that they are not a criminal, nor a security threat to our nation by passing security and background checks, then they should be given the opportunity to obtain citizenship or permanent residency status if they so desire. These persons like many immigrant families before them must be extended the opportunity to better their lives and work towards the American dream.

It is clear that the strength of our economy greatly depends on immigrant families and their dedication and hard work. A fair and sound worker visa program must also protect the wages and working conditions of both U.S. and immigrant workers. Responsive and proper legal avenues must be made available to migrant workers so that they can work in an orderly, safe and just manner which affirms their human dignity.

It has become apparent to many Americans that our current immigration system is in great need of reform. Many of our citizens have become impatient and frustrated with this system and its often unfortunate consequences. An effective and comprehensive immigration proposal will require smart inspections and screening processes, fair proceedings, efficient processing, as well as strategies for cracking down on smugglers.

If the American public were better informed about the nature of the current problems in our immigration system and offered reasonable and just solutions, as contained in the comprehensive approach described above, I believe there would be strong support. A reasoned and just immigration proposal is truly something that Americans desire, I suggest; and something our country cannot afford to be without.

As this debate comes before the Senate, I appeal to you to exert leadership and support the comprehensive reforms contained in the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. Through your leadership and moral courage, the Senate can chart a course for the future of our nation that maintains our ideals as a nation of immigrants, upholds the rule of law and protects and promotes the common good of all.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of my thoughts on this matter. I look forward to your response to my concerns on this critical issue.

Sincerely yours,
Most Reverend John G. Vlazny
Archbishop of Portland in Oregon
President, Oregon Catholic Conference



Migration and Refugee Services
Office of Migration and Refugee Policy

February 22, 2006

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned Catholic organizations, write to urge that you support the principles and provisions embodied in S. 1033, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005, as the Senate prepares to take up comprehensive immigration reform legislation. We also strongly urge you to oppose the inclusion of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, and its provisions in the legislation that the Senate takes up.

As you know, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 is bipartisan legislation that was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA). This legislation represents a comprehensive, bipartisan approach to immigration reform that would repair our broken immigration system. In contrast, H.R. 4437, which the House of Representatives passed last December, is a punitive and overly-broad enforcement-only approach to immigration reform which we believe would unduly harm legal immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, trafficking victims, victims of domestic violence, children, public charities, and many communities in our country without solving our current immigration problems.

The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 would reform our legal immigration system by creating an "earned" adjustment program for undocumented migrants who currently reside in the United States. It also would establish a temporary worker program with worker protections to provide legal avenues for future flows of migrant workers. And it would make changes to our family preference system that would reduce the current lengthy waiting times for family reunification.

We believe that the principles and provisions contained in S. 1033 reflect the most efficient and effective approach to immigration reform. The bill examines and makes changes to all aspects of the current system. The bill's "earned" adjustment program would address the plight of undocumented workers without providing them an "amnesty." And the properly constructed temporary worker program in the bill, when combined with its changes to the family preference system, would create legal avenues for migrants who seek to enter our nation to work or be reunited with family members.

Moreover, S. 1033 includes several enforcement provisions which would strengthen our nation's ability to secure the border in an effective and humane manner, including increased technological resources and a requirement that a National Strategy on Border Security be developed. S. 1033 would help manage migration by creating a safe, orderly, and legal system, ultimately a far more effective approach to managing security concerns.

In contrast, H.R.4437 relies solely on counterproductive and over-the-top penalties, as well as overly-broad and inefficient so-called enforcement measures, to address our immigration problems. Indeed, the problems with H.R.4437 are so numerous that it would take a separate letter of great length to address all of them. Among its many harsh provisions that concern us are those that would criminalize undocumented presence in the United States, making it a felony punishable by more than a year in prison, and a provision that could make it a criminal offense for charitable organizations to assist undocumented migrants. This latter provision could potentially place church workers, health-care workers, or other Good Samaritans at risk of criminal prosecution and imprisonment for acts of kindness, even in emergency situations.

As you consider the issue of immigration reform, we ask that you support the comprehensive solution to our nation's immigration crisis found in the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005. As a nation of immigrants, we can achieve an immigration system which upholds the rule of law, respects the basic human rights and dignity of the migrant, and ensures our national security.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Catholic Charities USA
Catholic Relief Services
Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Catholic Health Association
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Jesuit Conference
Irish Apostolate USA

Epiphany calls to mind plight of migrants, refugee populations

Jan 5, 2006 Sentinel Column by Archbishop John Vlazny

This weekend the Christmas season comes to a close with the celebration of the feast of the Lord's Epiphany. Many of us have been travelers during this season. Epiphany calls to mind some travelers long ago who left their homes to find the newborn child. As Scripture tells the tale, shortly after the Magi's visit to Bethlehem, the Holy Family also became travelers, refugees who were fleeing the horror of the infanticide being perpetrated by King Herod.

This coming week, Jan. 8–14, marks the 25th anniversary observance of National Migration Week. The theme for this year's observance is "Journey to Justice," a journey we are all invited to make in solidarity with migrants, immigrants, refugees, human trafficking victims and other people on the move who are in search of justice and peace. This call to solidarity with people on the move is needed now more than ever.

Mary and Joseph, because of their own experiences as refugees in Egypt with their newborn child, are appropriate patrons of refugees and migrants throughout the world. The purpose of National Migration Week is to promote multicultural understanding, awareness of migrant and refugee issues and to encourage institutions and individuals to extend welcome to newcomers. With our archdiocesan focus on multicultural evangelization, how could we be uninterested in such an effort?

Late last summer Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. Gulf Coast caused the displacement of many of our fellow citizens. In a sense they too became "refugees," but many of them, in spite of their suffering, were uncomfortable with that label. Could that be because we tend to look down upon refugees in today's world?

At the present time there are more than 30 million refugees and displaced persons across the globe. Many of them are desperate men, women and children fleeing death and destruction, just like the folks down on the Gulf Coast. Most of us don't have firsthand experience of their suffering, but we have responded with humanitarian relief and welcomed many of them to our own nation. There is, unfortunately, an undercurrent of discontent about the kind of hospitality that should be offered to refugees. No wonder the folks from the South were hesitant to be included in their number.

More than three years ago now, the Mexican and U.S. bishops together issued a pastoral letter titled "Strangers No Longer, Together on the Journey of Hope." Based on principles of Catholic social teaching, it stated: 1) persons have the right to find economic, political and social opportunities in their homeland; 2) persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families; 3) sovereign nations have the right to control their borders; 4) refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection by the global community; and 5) the human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

We know that many of the recent immigrants to our land have come here seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Yet they face discrimination and exploitation. That is why the call to solidarity during this year's National Migration Week is needed more than ever. As the bishops wrote, "From its founding to the present, the United States remains a nation of immigrants grounded in the firm belief that newcomers offer new energy, hope and cultural diversity. Our common faith in Jesus Christ moves us to search for ways that favor a spirit of solidarity. It is a faith that transcends borders and bids us to overcome all forms of discrimination and violence so that we may build relationships that are just and loving."

This past October, together with 37 other national religious organizations, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called for a comprehensive immigration reform that "establishes a safe and humane immigration system" consistent with our faith traditions of welcoming immigrants. Unfortunately, without grassroots support for such an initiative, it will probably go nowhere, given the present mood of the country. Therefore it is important for us as people of faith to become better informed about immigrants and the problems inherent in our current immigration laws. It is my hope that in the coming year our parishes will be able to participate in an educational process about immigration and support whatever advocacy initiatives are needed to bring about change.

The need for reform is underscored by the fact that during the last decade our Congress has enacted one harsh, overly punitive immigration control measure after another, but the problems in our immigration system continue to grow. Serious consideration should be given to the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, which has been introduced in the U.S. Senate (S.1033, introduced by Senators McCain and Kennedy). Several of the provisions in that bill are in keeping with our bishops' immigration policy priorities. They include:

- a temporary work program which would permit foreign-born workers to enter the United States and work in a safe, orderly and legal manner;

- allowing undocumented workers currently residing in the United States and contributing to our society the opportunity to earn permanent residency over time (This would stabilize our work force and allow law enforcement to direct resources to apprehend and prosecute smugglers, human traffickers and terrorists);
- a reduction in the long waiting time for family reunification for immediate family members, including spouses and children, and
- strengthening the enforcement of our nation's immigration laws in such a way that in no way does it violate basic human dignity.

When all is said and done, there is much to learn and do. This project will involve us all on another journey, a journey of hope that will provide justice for immigrants. After all, refugees and migrants are companions for all of us on our lifelong journey to justice, a journey that is filled with faith, hope and joy, even in the midst of loss and suffering.

Model Letter to Senators and Representatives

United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Senator Ron Wyden (D)
1220 SW 3rd Ave, Suite 585
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 326-7525
(202) 224-5244
<http://wyden.senate.gov>
email : <http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/>

Senator Gordon Smith (R)
121 SW Salmon St., Suite 1250
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 326-3386
(202) 224-3753
<http://gsmith.senate.gov/>
email : <http://gsmith.senate.gov/webform.htm>

United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Representative David Wu (D) 1st District
<http://www.house.gov/wu> 202-225-0855
Representative Greg Walden (R) 2nd District
<http://www.house.gov/walden> 202-225-6730
Representative Earl Blumenauer (D) 3rd District
<http://www.house.gov/blumenauer> 202-225-8941
Representative Peter DeFazio (D) 4th District
<http://www.house.gov/defazio> 202-225-6416
Representative Darlene Hooley (D) 5th District
<http://www.house.gov/hooley> 202-225-5711

Capitol switchboard 800-826-3688

Dear Senator _____

Knowing that the Senate is poised to take up immigration reform proposals soon, I write to strongly encourage you to reject restrictionist and narrow, enforcement-only proposals, in favor of reforms that will comprehensively fix our broken immigration system.

The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (S.1033), introduced by Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), provides such a comprehensive approach to solving the ills of the current system. It recognizes that law and border enforcement strategies will only be successful when our laws provide more responsive legal avenues for immigrant workers and those seeking to be with family. Anything short of this mix of strengthened enforcement and expanded legal channels for entry is doomed to fail.

Any serious proposals for reforming our immigration system must also deal with the record number and growing population of people who are here without proper immigration status. Rather than granting "amnesty," we should offer an opportunity for these people who have been living in the shadows to come forward and earn the legal means of remaining. I believe that if the American public were better informed about the nature of the current problems in our immigration system and offered reasonable solutions, as contained in the comprehensive approach described above, there would be strong support.

I appeal to you to exert leadership in this debate as it comes before the Senate and support the comprehensive reforms contained in the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. Through national leadership and moral courage, the Senate can chart a course for the future of our nation that maintains our ideals as a nation of immigrants, restores the rule of law, and protects the homeland.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope

The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

A record high of more than 34 million foreign-born persons reside in the United States. Just in the past 20 years, about 23 million newcomers have arrived. This immigration growth has had a profound impact on the Church, with as many as 300,000 Catholics arriving each year from all regions of the world.

At the same time, U.S. immigration laws and policies have become increasingly restrictive and even harmful to some immigrants and asylum seekers. Between 8 and 10 million people in the U.S. live on the margins of our society for lack of proper immigration documentation. U.S. residents who want to reunite with close family members must often wait 10, 15, and even more years before visas for their relatives become available. Border enforcement strategies employed along our southern border have resulted in thousands of deaths. And, asylum seekers who flee persecution in their home countries and look for safe haven in the U.S., instead find themselves detained as criminals for lengthy periods.

The bishops believe U.S. immigration policy should protect the human rights and dignity of newcomers, as well as provide legal and secure means of entry for prospective immigrants and asylum seekers. The bishops also acknowledge with concern a growing public sentiment that has led to these more restrictive immigration laws and policies.

The bishops have called for broad reforms of U.S. immigration laws and policy. In a landmark pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, issued in January 2003, the U.S. and Mexican bishops outlined the elements of necessary reforms. These included legalization for the undocumented who have built equities in our country; expanded opportunities for legal entry for work and to reunite with family members; establishment of an appropriate and more responsive temporary workers program; and the re-establishment of due process rights and other safeguards.

Additionally, the bishops recognize that the conditions that compel people to leave their homes out of desperation and lack of opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, must be addressed if an effective and comprehensive response to migration is to be achieved. Therefore, the *Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform* will work closely with the *Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty*, initiated by the USCCB Office of International Justice and Peace and Catholic Relief Services. That Campaign aims to reduce poverty through trade, aid and debt reforms. The *Immigration Reform* and *Global Poverty* campaigns are integrally related in that one addresses the rights and needs of migrants in the U.S., while the other addresses the rights and needs of persons living in their native countries.

Summary Description of Campaign

A number of Catholic organizations with national networks have decided to form a national campaign designed to unite and mobilize a growing network of Catholic institutions, individuals, and other persons of good faith in support of a broad legalization program and comprehensive immigration reform. Its goal will be to maximize the Church's influence on this issue, consistent with the immigration reform principles enunciated in the bishops' pastoral letter.

Initial participating organizations include the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in particular, Migration and Refugee Services, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Domestic Social Development, International Justice and Peace, and the Hispanic Affairs Secretariat; the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); the Catholic Health Association (CHA); Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA); Catholic Relief Services (CRS); National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry (NCADDHM); the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW); the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA); the U.S. Jesuit Conference; the Leadership Conference of Women Religious; the Conference of Major Superiors of Men; the National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD); the Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network; and The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors. These organizations will enlist a growing number of institutions and individuals, within and outside their traditional networks, who will commit to engaging in education and advocacy in support of the Campaign.

The Campaign will have four primary objectives: (1) to educate the public, especially the Catholic community, including Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants; (2) to create political will for positive immigration reform; (3) to enact legislative and administrative reforms based on the principles articulated

by the bishops; and (4) to organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms. It is anticipated that a multi-year campaign will be necessary to achieve these objectives.

Some of the specific activities to be pursued include the following:

- developing and mobilizing grassroots networks, including broad coalitions, at the diocesan, parish, and community levels to engage in public education and advocacy;
- media outreach;
- pursuing legislative strategies;
- development of an interactive website and various educational and advocacy materials.

Funding to support this Campaign is being sought from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, other participating organizations, and foundations.

The active support and participation of the bishops will be crucial to the success of the Campaign. The Campaign aims to reach beyond the networks of the participating national agencies, and to enlist the support of Catholic individuals and institutions in dioceses throughout the country.

Official Statement of Most Reverend James Tamayo, Bishop of Laredo TX May 10, 2005

Good morning. I am pleased to be here with Cardinal McCarrick and others to announce the beginning of the *Justice for Immigrants* Catholic campaign. I hail from an area on the U.S.–Mexico border where, everyday, we witness the human consequences of a broken immigration system. Our experience on the border is far from the vision of the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed: many who seek to migrate are suffering, and, in some cases, tragically dying; communities are divided; and racist and xenophobic attitudes remain.

From my perspective on the border, I welcome the *Justice for Immigrants* campaign because Catholics are involved in all aspects of the migration phenomenon: they are enforcement officers; local, state, and national elected officials; community residents and parish members; and migrants themselves. But often members of our faith work at cross purposes or against each other, leading to division and rancor in local communities and in our parishes. With education and through prayer, we hope, through the Campaign, to bring Catholics of differing perspectives together to find a humane solution to our immigration crisis.

We also are launching the *Justice for Immigrants* campaign because the U.S. Catholic bishops are united in the view that the status quo is unacceptable and that comprehensive immigration reform is needed. We can no longer accept a situation in which some public officials and members of our communities scapegoat immigrants at the same time our nation benefits from their labor. We can no longer accept a status quo in which migrants are compelled to risk their lives in order to support their families. We can no longer accept a reality in which migrants fill jobs critical to Americans and U.S. employers without receiving appropriate wages and benefits. We can no longer tolerate the death of human beings in the desert.

Since 1994, the U.S. government has spent billions of dollars attempting to enforce the U.S.-Mexico border. Despite dramatic increases in Border Patrol agents, technology, and fencing, migrants desperate to find work still attempt to cross dangerous treks of the desert, often turning to unscrupulous smugglers for assistance. During this same period, the number of undocumented in our nation has almost doubled and, most tragically, close to 2800 migrants have perished.

As bishops, we attempt to highlight the moral dimensions of public issues. Clearly, because of the suffering imposed by a broken system, comprehensive immigration reform is a moral imperative. We call upon our elected officials, particularly President Bush and members of Congress, to expeditiously enact legislation which 1). provides a path to permanent residency for immigrants and their families; 2) creates a worker program which ensures the rights of all workers; 3). reforms our family-based immigration system to reduce waiting times for family reunification; and 4). restores due process protections for immigrants so that families are not divided. Such legislation, we believe, will make our nation more secure by bringing immigrants “out of the shadows” and helping law enforcement distinguish between those who help us and those who seek to harm us.

As a universal church, we also urge our policymakers to seek solutions to the root causes of migration, so that migrants may remain at home and support themselves and their families. We stand at a crucial time in our history. We must take bold action, not only to ensure that our nation is safe, but also to ensure that we remain an open and diverse society.

Talking Points on Senate Immigration Reform

- There is growing frustration over the lack of political will to fix our broken immigration system. It is increasingly clear to a broad cross-section of Americans that our current laws are outdated, ineffective and in serious need of repair.
- To truly fix the problems, however, will require a comprehensive approach, rather than the narrow, enforcement-only proposal adopted by the House of Representatives (H.R. 4437.)
- Our government has dramatically increased the amount of resources for border enforcement in recent years, yet has not addressed the legal immigration provisions of our nation's laws. Consequently, desperate people who have limited or no legal means to come to the U.S. for jobs and to be with family have come clandestinely in record numbers.
- The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437), recently passed by the House, is unacceptable and, ultimately, ineffective. The Senate must reject that bill. It would criminalize undocumented presence and criminalize those who would assist them, including those providing humanitarian assistance. It would also require the detention of families and children, trafficking victims, and other vulnerable people, and potentially deport asylum seekers to the very governments from which they fled persecution. The bottom-line is that this bill will not fix the problems or make our country any safer, but it would change our character as a nation in ways that we will regret.
- As the Senate takes up immigration reform proposals, the following elements must be incorporated into the package for these efforts to be successful and to enjoy the support of a majority of Americans.
- **Reform Must Be Comprehensive.** To truly fix the immigration mess we cannot take a narrow, one-dimensional approach, as was contained in the recent House-passed measure (H.R.4437) True and effective immigration reforms must deal with (1) the undocumented immigrants working and living in the U.S., (2) legal means to enter the country for work and to join family members, (3) enforcement strategies that are effectively targeted and that uphold human dignity. Moreover, U.S. multi- and bi-lateral international policies must encourage opportunities for people in their home countries to achieve a dignified living and not be compelled to migrate out of necessity.
- **Provide a Pathway to Residency and Citizenship.** The undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. must be given the opportunity to earn the right to remain in the U.S. if they satisfy certain criteria, including that they are not a security threat and not a criminal. Those who pass background and security checks should be eligible for permanent residence and citizenship, if they so desire.
- **Provide Worker Visas and Protections.** There must be greater legal means by which needed workers can be admitted, both temporarily and permanently, to fill available jobs. Such a workers visa program must adequately protect the wages and working conditions of U.S. and immigrant workers. Adequate and responsive legal avenues for migrant workers must be created so that they can enter and work in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner.
- **Keep Families Intact.** The debilitating and inhumane family visa backlogs that currently keep families separated for years must be eliminated and more visas made available to ensure family unity. The cornerstone of a strong society is the strength of the family. Thus, our immigration laws must ensure that family unity is facilitated and supported.
- **Strengthen Security and Restore the Rule of Law.** This can best be accomplished through a comprehensive overhaul of our immigration system that combines needed reforms -- a path to permanent status for immigrants here and expanded visa availability for those coming in the future -- with effective and targeted enforcement. Effective enforcement requires smart inspections and screening processes, fair proceedings, efficient processing, as well as strategies for cracking down on smugglers.

Conclusion:

The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 (S.1033), introduced by Senators McCain and Kennedy, should be supported, for it is the best proposal to date that embodies the comprehensive reforms proposed by the bishops.

Major Provisions of HR 4437

<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/HR4437.html>

The following is a summary of the major provisions of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. The legislation passed the House of Representatives 239-182 on Dec. 16, 2005.

“Unlawful presence” would now be considered a crime and a felony, meaning that undocumented immigrants may have to serve jail time and would be barred from future legal status and from re-entry into the country.

Immigrants, including asylum-seekers, victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic abuse, and children who are apprehended along an international border or at a port-of-entry would be detained until such time as they are removed from the nation or otherwise provided immigration relief.

Anyone or any organization who “assists” an individual without documentation “to reside in or remain” in the United States knowingly or with “reckless disregard” as to the individual’s legal status would be liable for criminal penalties and five years in prison. This could include church personnel who provide shelter or other basic needs assistance to an undocumented individual. Property used in this act would be subject to seizure and forfeiture.

The use of expedited removal, which would permit DHS enforcement personnel to remove a potential asylum-seeker without providing an opportunity to appear before an immigration judge or qualified adjudicator, would be mandated within 100 miles of the border and within 14 days of a person’s entry into the country.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would be required to erect up to 700 miles of fencing along the Southwest border at points with the highest number of immigrant deaths.

State and local law enforcement are authorized to enforce federal immigration laws. State and local governments which refuse to participate would be subject to the loss of federal funding.

Asylum seekers and refugees who are convicted of a minor offense, such as petty theft, would be barred from permanent legal residence and eventual citizenship.

Document fraud would be considered an aggravated felony and would subject an asylum-seeker to deportation and bars to re-entry.

Nationals from countries who do not accept the return of aliens who commit crimes in this country would not be admitted to the United States. This would include countries such as China, Vietnam, and Cuba.

DHS would be given the authority to continue to detain individuals who have served their sentences based upon a determination that they are a “dangerous alien,” contrary to Supreme Court rulings barring indefinite detention.

The diversity visa lottery program, which allows 50,000 immigrants each year from countries around the world to permanently reside in the United States, is eliminated.

These represent a few of the most egregious provisions of H.R. 4437. We urge you to contact your representatives to express deep concern with the passage of this legislation.