



PENNSYLVANIA
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

A Call for Fair and Realistic Immigration Reform
A Statement from Pennsylvania's Catholic Bishops

Most Pennsylvanians have immigrant roots. Each family has a unique story, but so many stories include hard working, faith-filled ancestors who came to America to pursue a dream and worked hard to fulfill it.

Immigrants have significantly contributed to the growth of our country. The Catholic Church has always provided spiritual and social services to immigrants out of a strong belief that immigrants deserve the same basic rights and freedoms owed to every child of God. Our Church is an immigrant Church, built by our ancestors who left difficult situations abroad to establish communities where they could work, support their families, and be free to worship and live in accordance with their beliefs. Today's immigrants seek the same opportunities.

Millions of undocumented immigrants live in the United States today. Many left their home countries because of poverty and persecution. The overwhelming majority is hard-working and poses no threat to anyone. Americans are rightly concerned for our nation's public safety, respect for the law and the solvency of our public institutions. As a sovereign state we have a right to control and secure our borders. But these legitimate issues do not absolve us from fixing a broken immigration system that often fails to protect the basic dignity of immigrant men, women, and children seeking a better life.

The Church seeks fair and realistic immigration reform that upholds the God-given dignity of every human being. As Jesus taught us, "what you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto me." (Matt. 25: 35 – 41). Therefore, we the Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania urge support for reforms that:

- ✓ Provide a reasonable path to citizenship for undocumented persons living in the United States.
- ✓ Preserve and strengthen family unity as a cornerstone of our immigration system.
- ✓ Offer legal avenues for low-skilled immigrants to work in the United States.
- ✓ Restore and respect rights of due process for individuals caught up in the immigration system.
- ✓ Promote efforts to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty and persecution.

People of goodwill can legitimately disagree about the specifics of immigration reform, but the time is clearly long past due for America to fix its broken system. Please send a message to your elected officials today by going to www.pacatholic.org and clicking on "Pass Immigration Reform," or call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-225-3121 and ask to be connected to your Congressional Members' offices.

May God give us the courage to recast our immigration system in a spirit that secures the safety of our nation, but also welcomes and respects the strangers among us.