



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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June 18, 2018

Dear Representative,

I write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM) concerning the two pending immigration bills that may be brought to the House floor this week.

For over 18 years, the Catholic Church has urged Congress to put forth and pass a common sense and just legislative solution for Dreamers, young people who were brought to the U.S. by their parents. We believe that any such legislative solution must: (1) be bipartisan, (2) provide Dreamers with a path to citizenship, (3) be pro-family, (4) protect the vulnerable; and (5) be respectful of human dignity with regard to border security and enforcement.

While my brother bishops and I appreciate your good faith effort to find a legislative solution for Dreamers by bringing immigration measures before the full House of Representatives, these two bills contain a number of provisions that cause us serious concern. As the USCCB/COM has [written](#) regarding our opposition to H.R. 4760 in the past, I turn to the second, yet-to-be-numbered alternative immigration bill that also may soon be before you. As written, this bill contains several provisions that run contrary to our Catholic social teaching. Specifically, it would:

- undermine asylum protections by significantly raising the hurdle applicants face during the “Credible Fear” review;
- lead to increases in child and family detention through the proposed changes to the Flores Settlement;
- eliminate protection for unaccompanied minors through the proposed changes to the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRRA);
- includes part of the DACA-eligible population but does not include same population eligible in the USA Act and the Dream Act;
- make sweeping cuts to family-based immigration; and
- unilaterally implement a safe third country agreement without a bilateral or multilateral treaty or agreement.

Lastly, it is important to note that the bill would not end the practice of separating families at the U.S./Mexico border, which could be ended by the Administration at its discretion at any point. Instead, (as mentioned above) this bill would increase the number of children and families in detention, which is not acceptable.

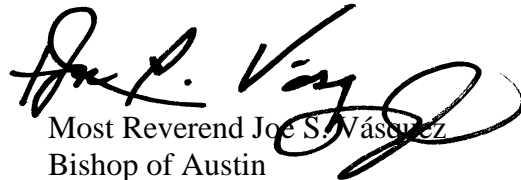
While we truly want a legislative solution for Dreamers, we cannot, in good faith, endorse large structural changes to the immigration system that detrimentally impact families and the vulnerable, such as those that are contained in this legislation. The Catholic Church's work in assisting these vulnerable migrants stems from the belief that every person is created in God's image and should be treated with compassion and dignity.

We respectfully urge you to reject H.R. 4760. With respect to the alternative immigration bill that has been put forward, we ask for timely consideration of our concerns mentioned above, particularly the cuts to family-based immigration, as well as the harmful changes to the asylum system and existing protections for unaccompanied children. Without such changes to these measures, we would be compelled to oppose it.

We ask for a truly bipartisan effort to achieve a legislative solution for Dreamers that will protect them, keep our borders safe, and not harm families or the vulnerable. We remain committed to working with Congress to find such a solution.

Wishing you God's blessings in your work on these critical issues, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe S. Vasquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Most Reverend Joe S. Vasquez
Bishop of Austin
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration