



## Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

3211 Fourth Street NE • Washington DC 20017-1194

202-541-3065 • fax 202-722-8805 • email [mrs@uscgb.org](mailto:mrs@uscgb.org) • [www.usccb.org/mrs](http://www.usccb.org/mrs)

July 27, 2020

Dear Senators,

Over the past few months, you have heard from several U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) committees regarding the bishops' priorities for the next phase of COVID-19 relief. I write you on behalf of the United States Conference of Bishops' Committee on Migration concerning supplemental funding related to COVID-19 for refugee and immigrant families. Consistent with Catholic social teaching, we urge an inclusive approach to halting and mitigating the ongoing health and economic impacts of COVID-19. We believe that the pursuit of the common good must involve all people, including the most vulnerable populations on the margins, such as refugees and at-risk immigrant families. We are all in it together.

We urge you to include in the upcoming COVID-19 bill, S. 4071 the American Citizen Coronavirus Relief Act, sponsored by Senators Rubio (R-FL) and Tillis (R-NC). We believe this legislation is a step in the right direction to help ensure that certain immigrant families, specifically those which include a U.S. citizen parent, are eligible to receive the stimulus funding under the CARES Act and future COVID-19 relief. While the American Citizen Coronavirus Relief Act does not protect all U.S. citizen children who are currently ineligible for stimulus funding under the CARES Act, this is an important effort to ensure that more mixed-status families are able to receive support they desperately need to ensure family stability and health during this uncertain time.

We also urge you to include in the upcoming COVID-19 relief bill, S. 4307, Protecting Benefits for Elderly Refugees and Refugees with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act, sponsored by Senator Murray (D-WA). This bill would extend the period of eligibility for Supplemental Security Income for elderly and disabled refugees who are in the U.S. after fleeing religious and other persecution. The extension is necessary because of the long delays of up to seven years, in the naturalization process.

In addition to these requests relating to inclusion of S. 4071 and S. 4307 into the next COVID-19 bill, we ask you to also include:

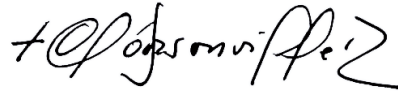
- automatic extension of work authorization and visas for all Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, as well as all immigrants who have been characterized as "essential workers." This enables immigrants and refugees to keep working and contributing to our economic rebound.
- testing and treatment for COVID-19 must be available to all. It is vital that all individuals are able to access care for their well-being as well as for community health.

- \$642 million to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement to respond to urgent needs of refugees and others under their care. As recent [research](#) shows, refugees have contributed greatly to the United States during this time.

The Catholic Church's commitment to assisting immigrants is rooted in our teaching on the sacredness and dignity of all human life, and all God's children were created in His image. Our work on behalf of immigrant and refugee families, in particular, is centered around the importance of the family unit to society. As Pope Francis has stated, the family "is the foundation of co-existence and a remedy against social fragmentation." Families are an essential element of our communities, parishes, and nation; they are what holds America together. Upholding and protecting the family unit, regardless of its national origins and its immigration status, is vital to our faith and to our country.

Thank you for considering these requests.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario E. Dorsonville". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "D".

Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville  
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration