Dear Senator,

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, I urge you to consider supporting S. 382, the “Protection of Kids in Immigrant Detention (PROKID) Act.” This legislation introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) helps to ensure that there is robust oversight for the care of unaccompanied immigrant children in government custody.

The PROKID bill offers oversight to the unaccompanied children’s program in the form of an ombudsman. In our work providing care for unaccompanied children, we know that on the ground monitoring and review of existing services is a helpful tool to ensuring unaccompanied children are safe and well-cared for. Ensuring greater review of the unaccompanied children’s program is a positive measure that will help improvement treatment of children in custody.

The Catholic Church’s work in assisting unaccompanied children stems from the belief that every person has a unique and sacred dignity and that we must help protect and defend the vulnerable. The protection of migrant children is an especially important issue for the Catholic Church as one of Jesus’ first experiences as an infant was to flee with his family from King Herod. The Church considers it a moral obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of unaccompanied children—this is an obligation that we are committed to upholding. For nearly 40 years, USCCB/Migration and Refugee Services has operated programs to aid in the protection of unaccompanied children, often working in both public and private partnership with the U.S. government.

We thank Congress for its long-standing commitment to the protection of vulnerable migrant children. We ask that you renew your commitment by supporting S. 382. We must continue to come together to ensure the safety of the most fragile among us and ensure that children are given the services and opportunities they need to live with dignity.

Sincerely,

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