
TALKING POINTS ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

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General

- The Catholic Bishops of the United States [welcome](#) efforts to pass bipartisan immigration reform legislation that includes legalization and a path to citizenship for undocumented people already living in the United States.
- While the Bishops support a broad legalization, some specific populations of concern include Dreamers,¹ long-time residents with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)/Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), migrant agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers.
- Bipartisan Senate action on the House-passed [American Dream and Promise Act](#) and the [Farm Workforce Modernization Act](#) is preferable, but if the Senate cannot move those bills as standalone measures, the Senate should attach provisions from those bills to some other vehicle, including budget reconciliation legislation.
- Ultimately, it is necessary to work toward a comprehensive legislative reform of our immigration laws, which our country so desperately needs, but legal status and a path to citizenship are critical for those who have established roots in the United States.
- With respect to any comprehensive legislative reform of U.S. immigration law, it is essential that such legislation preserve family unity, honor due process, promote respect for the rule of law, recognize the contributions of foreign-born workers, defend the vulnerable, and address the root causes of migration.

Why Now?

- Years of delay. American Catholics have been working toward immigration reform for decades. The 117th Congress has an opportunity to address immigration in a positive, productive, and forward-looking way. Disagreements about specific aspects of immigration policy should not stand in the way of relief for those already living as Americans in practice, if not on paper.
- A need for integration. Millions living in the United States today without legal status have been doing so for years, if not decades, and have established strong community ties. Many of those without legal status or access to permanent residency have U.S.-citizen children, homes, and businesses. They serve as leaders in their faith communities, schools, and other institutions. Catholic teaching affirms a nation's right to maintain its borders and regulate immigration. Moreover, immigrants "are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and

¹ Dreamers are young people who were brought to the United States without authorization as children by their parents or family members. Dreamers include those young people who have received DACA, those who are eligible and did not apply for DACA, as well as other undocumented individuals of a similar age group who did not make the age cutoff for DACA (as they were slightly older or younger at the time). The Catholic Church advocates for permanent legal protection and a path to citizenship for all Dreamers, not just DACA recipients.

spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2241). At the same time, it is contrary to Catholic teaching to have a “double society”, one visible with rights and one invisible without rights, unable to fully integrate. This is especially true when so many have committed themselves to the wellbeing of others and are simultaneously excluded from programs and denied rights afforded to citizens, as we’ve seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to say nothing of the billions of dollars in [taxes paid by undocumented immigrants](#), as well as all those who serve in the armed forces, some of whom are then [subject to deportation](#). The last three popes have all spoke clearly on the need for integration. Recently, it was Pope Francis who [said](#), “Immigrants, if they are helped to integrate, are a blessing, a source of enrichment and new gift that encourages a society to grow.”

- Recent court decision. A July 16 [ruling](#) from the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas has made it impossible for new DACA applicants to receive relief through DACA and has thrown into question whether even those protected by DACA will be able to continue receiving those protections in the future. This throws the lives of hundreds of thousands of Dreamers into uncertainty, and only Congress can provide a sustainable solution.

Catholic Social Teaching

- As Catholics, we are called to welcome newcomers and recognize the human dignity of every person. The Church’s solidarity and service related to migrants and refugees stems from the belief that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God.
- In the Old Testament, God calls upon his people to care for the newcomer because of their own experience as newcomers in a foreign land: “So, you, too, must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt” (Deut. 10:19). In his own life and work, Christ identified himself with newcomers and other marginalized persons in a special way: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). Through compassion for migrants, we live out the teachings of Christ.
- Catholics know families to be the building blocks of our society, and our society can only flourish if the families within it are given the opportunity to do so themselves. This includes immigrant and mixed-status families.

Economic Realities

- We know the positive economic impacts that immigrants have on our communities. Undocumented immigrants in particular are [estimated](#) to have contributed over \$20 billion in federal taxes in 2018, along with almost \$12 billion in state and local taxes. Rather than undermining wages, recognizing the millions of undocumented workers across the country will mean native-born workers no longer have to compete with those who are frequently exploited because they lack legal status.