



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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September 12, 2021

Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

Last week, I joined with four of my brother bishops who chair other United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) policy committees in sending a [letter to Congress](#) that sets forth the USCCB's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2022 budget reconciliation bill being assembled in the House and Senate.¹ As the House Committee on the Judiciary contemplates marking up its part of that bill, I write to reiterate those priorities and to express the support of the USCCB Committee on Migration for the draft migration-related provisions that the Committee expects to take up this week.

In our September 7 letter, we urged Congress to include legalization and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries, those covered by Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), undocumented agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers in the upcoming budget reconciliation bill. We are pleased that the legislation before the Committee would accomplish these goals. We urge all Committee members to support these provisions during the committee markup and to vote against any amendments offered to the measure that would either weaken them or rollback protections in existing law for vulnerable migrants seeking protection in the United States.

Additionally, we asked in our letter that Congress take steps to provide for the pastoral care and support of communities across the religious spectrum by permanently extending the special immigrant non-minister provision of the nation's religious worker visa program, which allows religious organizations to employ essential workers from abroad and sunsets at the end of Fiscal Year 2021. We hope that this can be included in this legislation as well.

The undocumented members of our society frequently experience mistreatment, exploitation, and family separation because of their immigration status. Many of those without lawful status or access to permanent residency have U.S.-citizen children/spouses, own homes, and manage businesses. While Catholic teaching affirms a nation's role in subjecting immigration to various juridical conditions, deporting all 10.5 million undocumented people in the U.S. would be unworkable, fragment families, and harm local communities. It is also contrary to the common good to have a "double society", one "visible" with rights and one "invisible" without rights,

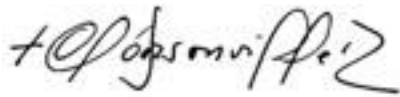
¹ USCCB, Letter to Congress on Federal Budget Reconciliation (Sept. 7, 2021), <https://bit.ly/3AaCW7B>.

unable to fully integrate. This is especially true when so many have committed themselves to the wellbeing of others as essential workers and simultaneously have been excluded from programs offered to citizens, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. This need for integration and our deep concern for family unity are central to our engagement on these issues.

The provisions drafted by the House Judiciary Committee would not provide relief to all of our undocumented brothers and sisters. However, they would go a long way toward bringing many of them out of the shadows of our society and enable them to continue contributing to our collective wellbeing while living in dignity and without fear of being separated from their families and the country they have come to know as their own.

Thank you for your work on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario E. Dorsonville". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

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