



*Office of Justice and Peace
Campaign for Human Development
2838 E. Burnside St.
Portland OR 97214
Phone 503-233-8361*

March 21, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

Congress is preparing to take up comprehensive immigration reform once again in the coming weeks. The Church believes that all people have a right to life and dignity, regardless of race or national origin. We are calling on the Oregon Congressional Delegation to support comprehensive immigration legislation in the coming weeks. We urge you to support the principles and provisions embodied in S.1033, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005, and oppose the inclusion of provisions from H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.

As you know, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 is bipartisan legislation that was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA). This legislation represents a comprehensive, bipartisan approach to immigration reform that would repair our broken immigration system. In contrast, H.R. 4437, which the House of Representatives passed last December, is a punitive and overly-broad enforcement-only approach to immigration reform which we believe would unduly harm legal immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, trafficking victims, victims of domestic violence, children, public charities, and many communities in our country without solving our current immigration problems. We believe that the principles and provisions contained in S.1033 reflect the most effective approach to immigration reform.

Any just immigration reform proposal should address the root causes of migration, such as global poverty, and should include the following elements:

- **Earned Legalization:** An earned legalization program with a path to citizenship would require undocumented workers to work for several years, take English courses, and pay a fine in order to participate in the program. Such a program would help stabilize the workforce, promote family unity, and bring a large population “out of the shadows,” as members of their communities.
- **Future Worker Program:** A worker program to permit foreign-born workers to enter the country safely and legally would help reduce illegal immigration and the loss of life in the American desert. Any program should include workplace protections, living wage levels, safeguards against the displacement of U.S. workers, and family unity.
- **Family reunification:** It currently takes years for family members to be reunited through the family-based legal immigration system. This leads to family breakdown and, in some cases, illegal immigration. Changes in the family-based immigration should be made to increase the number of family visas available and reduce family reunification waiting times.
- **Restoration of due process rights:** Due process rights taken away by the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) should be restored, particularly the elimination of 3 and 10 year bars and the use of judicial discretion in deportation proceedings.



*Office of Justice and Peace
Campaign for Human Development
2838 E. Burnside St.
Portland OR 97214
Phone 503-233-8361*

- Addressing Root Causes: Congress should examine the root causes of migration, such as wage inequities and the lack of job opportunities in sending countries, and seek long-term solutions in areas of development, debt, and trade. The antidote to the problem of illegal immigration is sustainable economic development in sending countries. In an ideal world, migration should be driven by choice, not necessity.
- Humane enforcement provisions: Strengthen our nation's ability to secure the border in an effective manner and help manage migration by creating a safe, orderly, and legal system, ultimately a far more effective approach to managing security concerns. By replacing illegal migration with legal migration, law enforcement will be better able to focus upon those who truly threaten public safety: drug and human traffickers, smugglers, and potential terrorists. Any enforcement measures must be targeted, proportional, and humane.
- Reject criminalization of undocumented workers and people who assist them Do not make it a criminal offense to be undocumented, or for charitable organizations to assist undocumented migrants. This latter provision could potentially place church workers, health-care workers, or other Good Samaritans at risk of criminal prosecution and imprisonment for acts of kindness, even in emergency situations.

As you reconsider the issue of immigration reform, we ask that you support a comprehensive solution to our nation's immigration crisis, as found in the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005. As a nation of immigrants, we can achieve an immigration system which upholds the rule of law, respects the basic human rights and dignity of the migrant, and ensures our national security. Our parishes will be conducting a petition drive over the coming weeks in support of this legislation, and will be sending signatures directly to your office.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

David Carrier
Director
Office of Justice and Peace