



PURPOSE OF THE VISIT: Ask Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform

WHAT WE SEE:

- **Families and Communities Torn Apart:** Hundreds of thousands of families are separated by our broken immigration system. Backlogs at USCIS of up to 22 years and the insufficient number of family-based visas force family members to choose between being separated for extended periods of time or illegally entering the country (Source: Bread for the World).
- **Talent Wasted:** Approximately 1.8 million individuals currently residing in the United States were brought to the U.S. at a young age. Each year, approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from American high schools. Many hope to pursue higher education, join the military, or enter the workforce, but their lack of legal status places those dreams in jeopardy and exposes them to deportation (Source: Immigration Policy Center).
- **Workers Exploited:** Migrant workers are consistently exploited and forced to work in unsafe conditions without fair compensation; this continues to drive down wages and promote divisions in communities and workplaces (Source: Southern Poverty Law Center)
- **Suffering Ignored:** Our asylum and refugee system is under threat. Rather than offering protection and compassion for those who have been forced to flee from their countries of origin, our system treats them as potential terrorists, subjecting them to lengthy delays in having their cases decided. (Source: Jesuit Refugee Service/USA).
- **An Increasingly Militarized Border:** the misguided border militarization of the last decade has cost \$100 billion, doubled the size of the Border Patrol without sufficient screening, training or accountability, led to over 6,000 dead and murdered immigrants, and allowed widespread civil and human rights violations. (Source: Kino Border Initiative)
- **Personal Testimony (if applicable):** Personalize the issue by sharing your story or the story of an undocumented immigrant you know

WHAT OUR FAITH TELLS US:

Catholic Social Teaching tells us that it is our “duty to welcome the foreigner out of charity and respect for the dignity and rights of the human person” (Source: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops). As members of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, we stand with the U.S. Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Jesuit Provincials in asking for immigration reform that supports family unity and a pathway to citizenship.

HOW COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM WILL HELP:

Protects the Vulnerable:

- 16.6 million people are in “mixed-status” families—those with at least one member who is undocumented. Nine million of these families have at least one U.S.-born child (Source: Pew Research Hispanic Center).

Creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants helps keep families together, and prevents children from needlessly being placed in foster care (Source: Applied Research Center).

- Refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people will face a fairer and more efficient system (Source: Jesuit Refugee Service/USA).

Allows Immigrant Youth to realize the American Dream:

- The passage of this bill would grant many undocumented youth access to legal residency, work authorization, and eventual citizenship. The DREAM Act would provide a status that matches the American identity they already have, and an opportunity for them to live up to their full potential and make greater contributions to the U.S. economy and society (Source: U.S. Jesuit Conference).

Reduces Future Undocumented Immigration:

- The only way to reduce undocumented immigration is to fix our immigration system so that people seeking work and family reunification can enter legally. For undocumented immigrants who are already here, we must provide a realistic way for them to adjust their status by passing background checks, learning English, and paying taxes if they aren't already, while working toward citizenship. This is not amnesty; it is the only smart, practical way to deal with the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Creates Safe and Humane Borders:

- Professionalized, accountable and humane enforcement of immigration laws should be part of any comprehensive immigration reform package. This will involve providing more robust and transparent oversight of all agencies responsible for enforcement measures (USCIS, CBP, and ICE) and a change in detention and deportation practices to preserve immigrants' dignity and safety. These changes should include eliminating nighttime deportations, keeping families together during the deportation process, and allowing NGOs to access Customs and Border Patrol facilities (Source: Kino Border Initiative).

Improves the Economy (Source: Congressional Budget Office):

- Immigration reform will reduce the budget deficit by \$158 billion in the first decade after the bill's passage and by an additional \$685 billion in the second decade.
- Granting legal status to undocumented immigrants will increase tax revenues by an estimated \$459 billion in the first decade after the bill's passage; legalization and naturalization of undocumented immigrants will bolster their wages, helping bring their families out of poverty.

OUR REQUESTS:

Will the Congressperson publically support and vote for a bill that includes the following principles?

- Create an accessible pathway to citizenship for all 11 million people without documentation;
- Support young people without documentation by enacting the DREAM Act;
- Work to maintain family unity in all elements of the immigration system;
- Protect the most vulnerable, especially refugees & asylum seekers;
- Respect the rights of U.S. and immigrant workers.