



NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby Position on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

BACKGROUND: NETWORK has worked for years for comprehensive immigration reform. It is one of the top issues of its members. It is not just a humanitarian issue, but it is also an economic issue in our globalized world. There are hundreds of treaties for the free movement of capital in our world but nothing for the free movement of labor. We need to regularize both in order to provide predictability to business and justice to families all over the world. Therefore, NETWORK advocates for the following:

- **RESTRUCTURING OF TRADE AGREEMENTS** to minimize the economic necessity that cause people to leave their homes and cross borders without the necessary documents.
- **SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SENDING COUNTRIES:** Many people come to the United States because of economic necessity. If we want to change this reality, then the U.S. needs to work with sending countries to help them develop their local economies. This is especially true of Mexico and Central America where the highest or second highest source of foreign revenue is the remittances sent home by their citizens.
- **RESPONSIBLE AND TIMELY FOCUS ON FAMILY UNITY:** More than 4 million people are waiting to join family members in the US because of the current limitations on visa numbers and increased fees. This is hurting US communities. The US should:
 - Increase the capacity of the immigration services to efficiently process applications.
 - Ensure transparency in the administration of fees and increase the use of fee waivers.
 - **Legislatively** increase in the number of visas each year in order to clear the backlog.
- **NEEDS OF PEOPLE RESIDING IN THE US WITHOUT CURRENT DOCUMENTS:** It is estimated that there are 10 to 12 million people in the United States who are “out of status” or “without status.” Many of these people are integrated into the communities where they live, pay taxes and yet live in the legal shadows. In order to create a realistic sense of order in our society we need to:
 - **Stop the workplace raids** that are crippling communities and tearing families apart.
 - Provide a way for these people to regularize status and have a path to citizenship.
 - This is especially true for individuals who came here as children and know no other country as their home. The DREAM Act is a vehicle to accomplish this quickly.
- **CURRENT US LABOR NEEDS:** With the current economic crisis, it is difficult to know the exact labor needs of the United States at this time. The Department of Labor needs to assess the actual number and type of workers that are needed so that there can be a realistic program utilizing foreign labor. In the meantime the Department of Labor needs to proactively enforce workers’ rights and protections without jeopardizing any worker’s immigration status.

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