

Catholic Alliance for the Common Good

Statement on U.S. Immigration Policy

May 4, 2006

We, the undersigned organizational partners of the Catholic Alliance for the Common Good, stand with the Sisters of Mercy today as their leadership gathers to ask Congress to pass a compassionate immigration reform measure. While many of our groups have previously issued separate statements on immigration, this document represents our collective call for legislation that places human dignity before narrow political interests.

In putting forth this call we are mindful of our own nation's immigrant heritage, as well as the Christian duty to welcome the stranger in our midst. Faithful citizens know that compassionate immigration policy must not only protect the right to provide humanitarian aid to undocumented immigrants, but should seek practical approaches to the issue that do not resort to criminalizing those who come to our country seeking opportunity.

This is only possible if our immigration policy seeks first and foremost to address the issue's root causes. While working abroad, many members of our organizations have observed first-hand the "push" factors – poverty, war, political strife, and lack of opportunity – that drive immigrants to leave their homelands and risk their lives in pursuit of better futures. We therefore implore lawmakers to consider the complexity of the migration issue when contemplating just immigration policies.

We also know that "illegal" immigration will continue, through increasingly inventive, desperate, and oftentimes tragic means, as long as the present global disparity of wealth and poverty persists. By virtue of its position as the world's economic leader, our nation carries a great responsibility: to ensure fair distribution of global resources and to wield power in ways that protect the lives and dignity of all human beings. While we affirm the right of our government to defend its borders against foreign infiltration, a moral and effective immigration policy must balance preserving U.S. prosperity with concern for the world's poor.

The need for faithful, effective immigration policy is shared by U.S. citizens of all races, creeds, and political orientations. We call today for an approach to immigration that foregoes divisive politics in favor of solutions that benefit the common good of both our nation and our world.

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Catholic Alliance for the Common Good
Catholic Democracy Institute
Catholics for the Common Good – Michigan
Center of Concern
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Franciscan Federation
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
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