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## FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### COMMISSION ON JUSTICE, PEACE & THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

14 North Bennet Street • Boston, MA 02113 • 617.248.8821

June 4, 2013

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As the Provincial Leaders of the Franciscan Friars (OFM) in the U.S., we write to offer our appreciation, encouragement and prayers for your continued call to Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. We are heartened that Congress is considering this action and have written the legislators to express our ardent support. As this legislation develops, we are encouraging Congress to shape their decisions based upon the moral framework put forth by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, spelled out in greater detail in a January 8, 2013 letter sent to you and Congressional leadership by our Directors of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. Namely, that the following principles be part of our nation's comprehensive immigration reform efforts:

- A path to citizenship that ensures that all immigrants have access to full rights
- A legal employment structure that protects both migrants and United States workers
- A realistic and sustainable mechanism for welcoming future immigrants
- Expedited family reunification and an end to policies and practices that keep families apart
- Due process protections, and accountable and humane enforcement of our immigration laws
- Economic assistance to and fair competition with developing nations to reduce push factors that lead to unlawful migration

We offer these principles as part of our ministry, as Franciscans responsible for caring for those with whom we have the privilege to minister. The Franciscan friars in the U.S. serve millions of people in more than 220 ministry sites. In many of these ministries, we witness each day the suffering borne by our undocumented brothers and sisters. This service we have the honor to offer is the latest chapter in our own experience of immigration in the United States. Franciscans have actively participated in the American story of migration since the 1500s when followers of St. Francis helped settle Saint Augustine, Florida.

The dehumanization and second-class personhood that the current immigration system creates must end. The work in Congress is a positive step, particularly if it will help reunify families and more strongly support the least powerful among us.

Our Roman Catholic moral tradition demands that we speak out in the face of injustice. We will continue our commitment to serve people in need, but also to call for the legal and social changes that will lead to greater justice for God's people. May God give you the understanding, wisdom and courage to complete the work needed to assure the creation of just and humane comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

Sincerely,

Leadership of Franciscan (O.F.M.) Provinces of the United States

Very Rev. John Puodziunas, OFM  
Assumption BVM Province  
Franklin, WI

Very Rev. John O'Connor, OFM  
Holy Name Province  
New York, NY

Very Rev. Primo Piscitello, OFM  
Immaculate Conception Province  
New York, NY

Very Rev. Gino Correa, OFM  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Province  
Albuquerque, NM

Very Rev. William Spencer, OFM  
Sacred Heart Province  
St. Louis, MO

Very Rev. John Hardin, OFM  
Saint Barbara Province  
Oakland, CA

Very Rev. Jeff Scheeler, OFM  
Saint John the Baptist Province  
Cincinnati, OH