



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

Honorable Members of the Senate
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

As the Provincial Leaders of the Franciscan Friars (OFM) in the U.S., we write to offer our appreciation, encouragement and prayers for your efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Though we may not agree with all aspects of *S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*, we believe it is a good step forward for millions of our immigrant brothers and sisters who are forced to live their lives in the shadows. In the months ahead, as this legislation develops, we strongly urge you to shape your 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 the President 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 on S. 744 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 passage 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
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Very Rev. Jeff Scheeler, OFM
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