

**Justice for Immigrants Campaign:  
A Journey of Hope  
3211 4<sup>th</sup> St. NE  
Washington, D.C. 20017**

June 28, 2007

Dear Colleagues in the Justice for Immigrants Campaign:

You no doubt have learned by now that the Senate rejected the call for cloture on the immigration reform bill. Consequently, the initiative appears to be dead for now in the Senate. It is not at all certain whether the House of Representatives will take up the issue, though we intend to turn our attention to that side of Congress.

I wanted to write to you, in light of this development, to say a word of encouragement. Yes, it is a dark day when our Senators cannot even muster the votes necessary for a proposal full of compromises, leaving millions continuing to live in the shadows and an immigration policy that's decades old and broken. But, you and many others in the Church who have been working this issue tirelessly for the past couple of years have learned some important lessons to be applied in the future. Let's look ahead.

First, it remains the reality that the *status quo* is acceptable to few people in this country. Thus, the need to reform the system will continue. Increased enforcement measures, including work place raids, will probably result in further anger among compassionate people who find it unacceptable to separate families under such conditions. So, sooner or later, our federal government must overhaul the system and legalize the undocumented. What we need to ask ourselves in the Church is, "how can we best influence things so that a political will for comprehensive reform is created and sustained?"

Second, we have learned in the JFI Campaign that when Catholics take the time and are open to learning the facts, as opposed to the myths, more often than not they see the logic of the bishops' reform proposals. We also see that we have not yet gotten to many Catholics to expose them to the facts and to what our faith teaches about migration and our responsibility to be a welcoming people. In the future, we need to redouble our educational and outreach efforts. We must find creative and effective ways to get to parishioners and others and help them think through these issues from a Christian perspective.

The USCCB Migration Committee, which has provided the direction for the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, met recently to discuss the state of affairs, including the fact that the JFI Campaign was slated to end at the end of 2007. The bishops decided to continue the JFI Campaign indefinitely. They recognize that much more still needs to be done to educate and help form Catholics' attitudes toward immigrants and the bishops see the JFI Campaign as an important vehicle to assist with this task.

In the coming weeks, you will be engaged by the leaders of the JFI Campaign to strategize going forward. I hope and pray that you and your colleagues around the country will be ready to sustain your commitment to this very important cause. Millions of people are depending upon the Church and others to bring about these needed changes. I dare say, too, that our nation needs our continued active involvement. What kind of nation will we be if we continue on the present path?

Although today's Senate action is a blow to our efforts to date, I am convinced that the Catholic network can and must pick up the pieces and renew our efforts for reform, beginning with reaching out to all Catholics who need a better understanding of the immigrants' reality and our teachings. Thank you for being there.

Sincerely,

Mark Franken  
Executive Director