

### JFI Campaign Update



The core members of the **Justice for Immigrants** campaign continue to meet monthly to share information on what each organization is doing to educate and advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. The JFI campaign has recently hired an education outreach coordinator who will develop additional materials that will be posted on the JFI website: [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

The very little “good news” is that the pro-immigrant and church organizations were able to fight off some very bad appropriations amendments that would have increased detention beds and expanded mandatory detention. The omnibus appropriations bill that passed included 2,000 additional detention beds and about \$2.7 million for border security, including detention. The bill also increased money for Legal Orientation Presentations in detention (\$3.7 million) and alternatives to detention.

In January 2008 the JFI legislative team members will again be visiting House members to oppose the Shuler “SAVE ACT” (HR 4088) enforcement-only bill. During these visits, members will also discuss the problems with detention procedures and the lack of oversight in many of the detention centers.

In coming months the group will be focusing on “new” messaging in order to better educate the public on the reasons people migrate, Catholic Social Teaching, our country’s values, etc.

On December 18, many dioceses across the country held special prayer services and other events calling for civility in the immigration debate.

### National Migration Week

January 6-12, 2008

#### Prayer for Migrants and Refugees

*Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.*

*Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.*

*Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,*

- *To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;*
- *To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;*
- *To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;*
- *To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;*
- *To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.*

*We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**Additional NMW resources are available on the USCCB website:**

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.shtml>

## CIIC Detention Committee

Several months ago the problem surrounding the detention of Irish undocumented immigrants was the focus of one of the regularly scheduled CIIC conference calls. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided to form a committee to study the issues further and come up with a plan of action that would assist CIIC members in handling detention cases. Members of the committee include: Sheila Gleeson, John Stahl, Michael Leonard, John McCarthy, Jim Cummins, Sr. Christine Hennessy, and Geri Garvey. Staff in the office of the Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas will also be involved. The committee has identified various issues to study for longer term prisoners who are convicted of a crime and serving a sentence, and for those short term prisoners who are detained for immigration violations and are awaiting deportation.

The Committee will share information, best practices and resources that can impact the problems as well as identify outside resources that can help with all of the CIIC members.

## New Ground Zero for Immigration

"The new ground zero in the debate over illegal immigration is Arizona, where the nation's toughest and potentially most far-reaching crackdown on undocumented workers and their employers is scheduled to take effect Jan. 1. The Arizona law, passed resoundingly by the state legislature after Congress failed to enact immigration reform last summer, penalizes companies that knowingly hire illegal immigrants by suspending their business licenses for up to 10 days; on a second offense, the business license would be revoked -- what Gov. Janet Napolitano (D) has called a corporate "death penalty." Thus the Arizona law may become a test case for how much pain a state is willing to endure, and inflict, in the name of ridding itself of a population that contributes enormously to its economic growth and prosperity...

For the entire article, go to:  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/25/AR2007122500877.html>

Source: *The Washington Post*

## Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Bishops of the United States

The entire document can be found on the USCCB website:

<http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/index.htm>

Sec. 83. The Gospel mandate to “welcome the stranger” requires Catholics to care for and stand with immigrants, both documented and undocumented, including immigrant children. Comprehensive reform is urgently necessary to fix a broken immigration system and should include a temporary work program with worker protections and a path to permanent residency; family reunification policies; a broad and fair legalization program; access to legal protections, including due process and essential public programs; refuge for those fleeing persecution and exploitation; and policies to address the root causes of migration. The right and responsibility of nations to control their borders and to maintain the rule of law should be recognized.

## Faith Leaders Call on Presidential Candidates and People of Faith to Conduct the Debate over Immigration in a Civil, Respectful Manner

*Coalition Urges Candidates to Reject Negative Rhetoric; Welcome the Stranger Among Us*

On December 17 in Washington, DC, Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, joined by **Bishop Thomas Wenski, Chair of the Committee on International Policy for the U.S. Catholic bishops**, Rev. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed, Rev. Luis Cortes, President, Esperanza USA, and Rev. Derrick Harkins, Senior Pastor, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, called on presidential candidates and Christians across the country to

conduct the conversation about immigration in a civil manner and remember the holiday seasons' wish of goodwill to *all* people.

Recently, much of the public discourse over immigration reform has turned to hateful rhetoric and blame towards undocumented immigrants. It is the responsibility of Christians to defend the dignity of our immigrant families, and this Christmas season Christian faith leaders reminded candidates and lawmakers that to embody the teachings of Christ they must promote a message of love and welcome instead of fear and exclusion.

**"As we approach the beginning of the Presidential primary season, it is important that the candidates offer humane and effective solutions to repair our broken immigration system, not harsh rhetoric and mean-spirited enforcement proposals,"** said Bishop Thomas Wenski, Chair of the Committee on International Policy for the U.S. Catholic bishops.

**"We don't need to create more enemies; we need the kind of cooperation and clear thinking that solves problems. Christianity is redeeming that which has gone bad,"** added Rev. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed.

**"The immigration issue is of the utmost importance to Hispanic families in the United States. I am hopeful that the rhetoric that we have heard will be toned down. Instead of the rhetoric that places blame, we begin the dialogue that America really wants and needs, one that leads to comprehensive immigration reform,"** stated The Reverend Luis Cortés, Jr, President of Esperanza.

**"As the debate surrounding immigration reform continues, it is clear that the hard work of crafting legislation and statutes that lead us toward a path of earned citizenship and effective enforcement remains a priority for all Americans. It is just as clear that hateful, inflammatory and destructive speech serves no purpose. No matter where one stands on the political spectrum regarding this issue, as Christians, we never possess the option to speak or act in a way that lessens the worth of any human being.**

**The African-American church has had a passionate voice for justice and equality. That voice must continue to be heard on behalf of those who seek to be productive partners in the American dream,"** said Rev. Derrick Harkins, Senior Pastor, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church.

**"In finding Immanuel as immigrant, wanderer and child, we embrace the true meaning of this holy season. As we understand Jesus as the helper of strangers and aliens, we ask our lawmakers and candidates to reject policies, practices, and language that marginalize vulnerable refugees and immigrants. We ask politicians and leaders to embrace the spirit of hope and expectation embodied in Advent and Christmas by lifting up hospitality and generosity to the stranger and the sojourner as our message to the world,"** added the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in her statement of support.

**"This nation, and our communities in Iowa in particular, deserve a more thoughtful conversation that helps us to not get caught up in this vitriolic kind of speech that demonizes, which ultimately dehumanizes, other individuals, however they came to be in the United States... We do not need any leaders who, by their tone and vitriol, further polarize people from being in community together and finding creative solutions,"** said Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer, Iowa Bishop of the United Methodist Church.

The religious community is uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge across our differences on immigration and a source of healing and reconciliation. We as Christians are pledging to do more to unite our communities and restore the fabric of our society that this growing hate threatens to tear apart. Through Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Christian leaders are speaking out through the media, educating their congregations about biblical responses to immigration, and mobilizing the voices of people of faith.

*Source: Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform*

## Blue Dog and Hispanic Caucus Members Find More in Common Than Expected

By most accounts, the first joint meeting of Blue Dog Coalition and Congressional Hispanic Caucus members who seek common ground on immigration went fairly well.

The meeting produced no breakthroughs that might lead to a bill acceptable to both sides of the Capitol, but participants found more areas of agreement than expected — on issues from education and health to rural development.

“It was one of the best meetings I’ve attended in my eight terms in the House,” New York Democrat [Nydia M. Velázquez](#), said of the pre-Thanksgiving Day get-together.

Though no other meetings have been scheduled for this month, the two groups say they hope to continue discussions on **immigration**, as well as other issues, in an effort to maximize their clout within the House Democratic Caucus.

“Often there are interests that groups share, and by the Hispanic Caucus and the Blue Dogs working together, we can better see where we can move our Democratic Caucus on issues important to our communities and our nation,” said Hispanic Caucus Chairman [Joe Baca](#) of California, who is also a member of the Blue Dogs.

Three other lawmakers also belong to both groups: [John Salazar](#) of Colorado and [Dennis Cardoza](#) and [Jim Costa](#) of California.

*Source: CQ Today, Dec 3, 2007*

## Immigration and the Candidates

Even by the low standards of presidential campaigns, the issue of immigration has been badly served in the 2008 race. Candidates — and by this we mean the Republicans, mostly — have been striking poses and offering prescriptions that sound tough but will solve nothing. They have distorted or disowned their pasts and attacked one another ferociously, but over appearances, not ideas — over who can claim to be the authentic scourge of illegal immigrants, and who is the Lou-Dobbs-Come-Lately.

Voters deserve much better than what these candidates have given them. The Democrats have done better, though they have not always responded with the courage and specifics this difficult issue demands. Before voters pick a candidate and a president, they should insist on serious answers to questions like these: What should be the role of immigrant labor in our economy? How does the country maximize its benefits and lessen its ill effects? Once the border is fortified, what happens to the 12 million illegal immigrants already here? Should they be expelled or allowed to assimilate? How? What about the companies that hire them?

For the entire article, go to: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/30/opinion/30sun1.html?pagewanted=1&th&emc=th>

*Source: New York Times, Dec 29*

## It's Open Season on Immigrants

By Bishop John Wester, Chair, Migration Com.

“The failure of immigration reform legislation last June has given some a green light to unleash harsh and polemical attacks on immigrants.

Some opponents of immigration reform have sounded the trumpets. Some elected officials and presidential candidates have joined the chorus.

Immigrants - undocumented and, by association, legal immigrants - have become the sacrificial lambs for myriad ills besetting the nation: an unpopular war, a slowing economy, failing schools and an inadequate and expensive health system, to name a few. This national frustration is compounded by the ineffectiveness of the political system to solve these problems.

The sad truth is that the political venting toward immigrants has done little to repair our immigration system or any of the other challenges we face as a nation. In fact, it diverts attention from meaningful reform. The nation's poisoned debate on immigration also cultivates nativist and xenophobic attitudes, which reduce the space needed for constructive dialogue.

To compound matters, the inability to fix our immigration system at the federal level has

left state and local governments flailing in their attempts to respond to the problem. ...

The basic issue that our nation must decide is whether we want to deport all undocumented people or whether we want to provide certain hard-working, otherwise law-abiding people legal passage and legal status. ...

The choice is clear. As a nation, we cannot accept the toil and taxes of the undocumented at the same time we scapegoat them, separate their families with enforcement raids and look the other way as they die in the desert.

Despite the shrillness of opponents, polls continue to show that the majority of the American public understands this and agrees that comprehensive reform is the answer. In fact, it is the only answer. "

For the entire article, go to:

[http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/cj\\_7611163](http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/cj_7611163)

*Source: Salt Lake Tribune*

### **SSA will NOT Mail "No Match" Letters**

Employers will get a pass this year on rules that would have required firing illegal immigrants. The Social Security Administration says it will not mail out "no-match" letters this year to more than 138,000 employers nationwide. The program was stymied because of a lawsuit by a coalition of labor, business and civil liberties groups.

*Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

### **Holy See Extols Respect for Immigrants' Rights**

Archbishop Addresses Migration Organization

"Migrants who know their rights and have them respected can be a positive force for their new countries, as well as their nations of origin," says the Holy See.

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, permanent observer of the Holy See to the Office of the United Nations and Specialized Institutions in Geneva, said this Nov. 29 when he addressed the 94th Council Session of the International Organization of

Migration. The session was held Nov. 27-30 in Geneva.

"Migrant workers, skilled and unskilled, have taken central place in many current debates." "This type of migration," he continued, "is looked at as a positive force for development of countries of origin, especially through the billions of dollars in remittances sent home by the migrants -- \$167 billion sent to developing countries in 2005 -- as well for the economy of receiving countries."

"In fact, for a growing number of countries, immigrants have become a necessity to compensate for the dwindling work force and for their demographic deficit," Archbishop Tomasi explained. "Fairness in recognizing the contribution immigrants make can serve as a good base for their integration."

However, the 67-year-old prelate added, "two important dimensions of contemporary migrations are not adequately discussed and paid attention to in the formulation of policies: the victims of migration flows and the priority that persons have over the economy.

"Present political trends appear clear and slanted in the direction of responding to the more emotional and vocal demands of public opinion for control and integration.

"In the long run, however, a fair and effective solution will come from a comprehensive approach that embraces all policy components: the rights of the state and of the receiving community, of the migrants, and of the international common good."

"In a parallel way," Archbishop Tomasi emphasized, "the social teaching of the Catholic Church, and in fact that of all religious traditions, looks at migrants as human beings in the first place and then as citizens or guests, or as economic and cultural agents."

"Education can play a major role," concluded the archbishop. "Migrants, aware of their rights, can be more secure in offering their services and talents and the receiving community, well informed and respectful of these rights, will feel freer in extending its solidarity in order to build together a common future."

*Source: Zenit*

## Arizona: New Immigration Lawsuit Filed

Lawyers have filed a second lawsuit challenging Arizona's new employer-sanctions law in an end-of-the-year rush by business groups to stop it before it goes into effect Jan. 1. The lawsuit was filed Sunday night, two days after a federal judge said the groups fighting the anti-illegal immigration law sued the wrong government officials.

The groups are now targeting the state's 15 county attorneys. In addition, their lawyers said Monday they planned to add a request for a temporary restraining order, which would put the law on hold until a judge can determine its constitutionality.

*Source: Associated Press*

## Cardinal Mahony: Candidates should focus on immigration

In letters to all the presidential candidates sent December 12, Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony urged them to "show leadership on the issue of immigration" and to work to find a "humane and comprehensive solution to our broken immigration system."

The cardinal expressed disappointment at the tone of the immigration debate and urged the candidates to replace verbal attacks on immigrants with a focus on policy solutions.

"I am deeply disturbed that, to date, the discussion on immigration has failed to significantly focus upon policy solutions to illegal immigration," he wrote.

"Rather, the debate has been characterized by verbal assaults on undocumented immigrants, assaults which have had the effect of alienating immigrants to our country -- not only the undocumented but also legal immigrants and newly naturalized citizens," he said.

Cardinal Mahony also reminded the candidates they have a responsibility to outline a vision for the future of the country that includes leadership on immigration reform. "Americans will support a candidate who leads on vital questions," he wrote, urging them to "end the polarizing and

dehumanizing rhetoric against immigrants and bring Americans together to support a common-sense plan."

"It is my belief that the emerging vision is incompatible with the views of the majority of the American people who understand the importance of embracing our heritage as a nation of immigrants," he added.

The cardinal noted that the current U.S. immigration system is "outmoded and is in need of major reform." He said immigrants are needed to work in industries yet there are insufficient visas to allow them to work legally and undocumented immigrants work hard and pay taxes yet they live in fear and hiding.

*Source: Catholic Online ([www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org))*

## Catholic Leaders in Oakland Call for Immigration Reform

Hundreds of Catholics marched through Oakland today (Dec 8) in support of immigration reform. For three years in a row, parishioners and Catholic leaders have marched in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. "Many of them are quite vulnerable because they are without documents," said Bishop Allen Vigneron. "They feel very much the need for God's protection, and the care of the blessed virgin."

The Catholic Bishops of California have issued a statement on immigration, including suggestions for how, what they call an outmoded policy, can be changed.

*Source: KCBS.com*

## Chamber promises to Oppose "onerous" State Immigration Laws

Anticipating that the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level might not occur for several years, the US Chamber of Commerce will continue to oppose state and local efforts to address illegal immigration. Immigration reform at the federal level is unlikely until businesses are faced with a lack of workers, said Chamber President Tom Donahue at a conference the largest business federation hosted, which examined the impact of state and local immigration laws. "To really get it

done," Donahue said, "I think it has to hurt more." In the meantime, Donahue pledged to challenge state laws that businesses could find onerous and to support separate pieces of federal legislation to change current visa rules.

Source: CCH® HR MANAGEMENT

## Catholic Priests Urge Immigration Reform

Responding to what they perceive as anti-immigrant rhetoric from presidential candidates, dozens of Roman Catholic priests on Tuesday (Dec 18) used the religious message of Advent to express support for immigrants and call for legislative reform.

The priests, most of whom lead congregations of Latino or Polish immigrants, gathered at Holy Name Cathedral to deliver a pastoral message and explain how the Catholic Church is responding to a recent rise in arrests and deportations. Similar events took place in the dioceses of Los Angeles; San Antonio; San Jose, Calif.; Trenton, N.J.; and Newark, N.J.

"We are deeply and profoundly troubled by the almost daily harsh and demeaning anti-immigrant rhetoric of media and press pundits," said Rev. Marco Mercado, pastor of Good Shepherd church in Chicago. "For these reasons, we stand in solidarity with our undocumented brothers and sisters to have hope and draw strength in this season when family unity and family love is so precious."

Source: Chicago Tribune

## The Immigration Swamp

As the presidential campaign intensifies, so does the nativist ferocity.

THE IDEA that 12 million illegal residents of the United States can be induced to quit the country en masse within four months is absurd on its face -- a non-starter in logistical, humanitarian, political, diplomatic, commercial and economic terms that would leave an indelible stain on this country for years. Yet that is the wrathful centerpiece of [Mike Huckabee's](#) "Secure America Plan," which the Republican presidential candidate issued the other day in the course of

his party's escalating enthusiasm for nastier-than-thou prescriptions to deal with illegal immigrants...

In a new survey by the [Pew Hispanic Center](#), half of all Hispanics in America reported that the debate on immigration has had a specific negative impact on their lives; 41 percent said that they or someone close to them had suffered discrimination in the past five years -- up from 31 percent in 2002.

The new data undercut the Republicans' frequent protestations that their targets are not legal immigrants but illegal ones. The attacks have become so venomous, and the policy proposals so pernicious, that, predictably, they have caused collateral damage among Spanish-speaking and non-native-born people generally. The anti-illegal-immigrant crowd would have us believe it honors and admires legal immigrants; in fact, it is making America a less hospitable place for them.

For the entire article, go to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/12/AR2007121202272.html>

Happy New Year  
to All

Your comments regarding this newsletter are welcome. Please fax or email any information you would like included in this newsletter to:

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