



JFI Campaign Update

The **Irish Apostolate USA** and other members of the *Justice for Immigrants* campaign continue their efforts to reach out to members in the House of Representatives to prevent their support of the Shuler enforcement-only bill, HR 4088 (SAVE Act). In addition to office visits, the JFI organizations, along with other faith groups and national immigrant advocacy organizations have sent letters opposing the bill to all House members, and in particular to the House Democratic leadership.

There is a possibility that the SAVE Act could go directly to the House floor for a vote if a discharge petition, signed by 218 members, is successful. We are hoping that the House leadership will prevent this from happening. In the February 22 edition of CQ, the following was reported:

“Discharge petitions are rare and face long odds of succeeding. But talk of such a move boosts the immigration debate’s profile in an election year, when the issue could be problematic for both parties.

The Blue Dogs and their GOP allies are pitted against Hispanic, liberal and farm-state Democrats who want Congress to at least temporarily legalize millions of working illegal immigrants already in the country — especially students and farmworkers — and expand visa limits to allow the entry of more foreign labor, especially seasonal workers needed this summer.”

The outlook is looking better at the national level with the three remaining Presidential candidates espousing a gentler approach to immigration. Both Democratic candidates have indicated that they support

comprehensive immigration reform, and the Republican candidate was one of the original sponsors of CIR in the Senate.

We will continue to follow the situation in Congress and keep you posted if any urgent action is needed.

Justice For Immigrants Campaign Hires New Director

The *Justice for Immigrants* Campaign of the U.S. Conference Catholic Bishops (USCCB) named **Antonio B. Cube Jr.** as its new national director. Cube is presently the legislative director for the Washington State Catholic Conference and has extensive experience as a public affairs consultant and in community outreach programs. He has over five years experience as a legislative assistant and has lead coordination of staff work activities on immigration, anti-poverty, social justice and minority issues. He also has served as a government affairs, communications and public relations consultant to the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Mr. Cube will start work at the USCCB March 17. He succeeds School Sister of Notre Dame Jane Burke, who retired from the position in November.

Source: Catholic News Service

Bishops ask ICE to Assist Families and Communities after Immigration Raids

Two United States Catholic bishops involved in immigration issues have written to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to express their concern about the protocols and the increased law enforcement activity of Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE).

The bishops asked the agency to adopt policies that would assist the families and communities affected by immigration enforcement actions. They also asked that the agency refrain from conducting enforcement actions at or near churches, hospitals, schools, or charitable organizations.

Bishop of Salt Lake City John Wester, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, and *Bishop Jaime Soto*, *coadjutor bishop of Sacramento* and Chairman of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, wrote the letter requesting policy changes to Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and his undersecretary Julie Meyers.

"Although ICE has recently issued guidance regarding worksite enforcement operations, we believe that the guidance falls short of what is necessary," the bishops wrote. Bishops Wester and Soto urged the release of primary caregivers after immigration enforcement actions and the improvement of family members' ease in locating detained relatives. Detained individuals should have better access to legal counsel, and ICE should avoid transferring detainees out of their community.

Community outreach and education programs should be developed to follow enforcement actions, the bishops said, and enforcement should be suspended during natural and man-made disasters.

In an additional statement on February 7, Bishop Wester criticized the recent congressional economic stimulus package that prohibited undocumented immigrants from receiving tax rebates.

"The decision to prohibit undocumented immigrants from receiving tax rebates in the stimulus bill highlights the injustice in our immigration system. It proves that these workers pay into the tax system and help support our economy. It also reveals the hypocrisy of our laws. With one hand our government attempts to deport these workers, but with the other it holds tight the taxes they pay into the system. This perpetuates an underclass of workers without full rights," Bishop Wester said.

"We should not accept the fruits of the labor of these workers at the same time we refuse to provide them the protection of our laws. As a democratic and free nation protective of human rights, we cannot have it both ways. Congress must mend a broken system and show the courage to enact comprehensive immigration reform," he continued.

Source: *Catholic News Agency*

TDs Visit Washington

Fr. Brendan McBride and Geri Garvey met with members of the Dáil who were visiting members of Congress during the last week in February. **John Cregan, TD, Darragh O'Brien, TD, and John Deasy, TD**, made up the delegation and were accompanied by **Myles Geiran** from the Irish Embassy. The TDs were in town to discuss trade, visas, immigration and other issues with their counterparts in the U.S. Congress and hope to return on a regular basis.

Registration is open for the
**"Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice --
National Migration Conference 2008"**

and can be accessed at

www.nationalmigrationconference.org.

The conference, to be held in Washington, D.C., July 28-31, will feature prominent national speakers, 50 workshops, and an advocacy day on Capitol Hill.

ILIR Press Release – Feb 23

The Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform scored a PR coup in the Democratic Debate on Thursday night when presidential contender Senator Hillary Clinton vowed to introduce immigration reform within the first 100 days of her presidency.

ILIR chairman **Niall O'Dowd** and Vice-Chairman **Ciaran Staunton** met with Senator Clinton on Wednesday and urged her to announce a 100-day strategy at the debate after earlier submitting the same message to the campaign.

On Thursday night, Senator Clinton earned a huge cheer from the audience in the University of Texas when she said: "We need a path to legalization, to bring the immigrants out of the shadows. ... If they had committed a crime in our country or the country they came from, then they should be deported. But for everyone else, there must be a path to legalization. I would introduce that in the first 100 days of my presidency."

We Can Stop the Hate

The country's leading Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization began a campaign targeting several newscasters and presidential candidates for what it deems "rhetoric that demonizes immigrants and Hispanic Americans."

The National Council of La Raza, which includes nearly 300 affiliated organizations, launched a new initiative titled "[We Can Stop The Hate](#)," aimed at curtailing the influence of CNN's Lou Dobbs and Glenn Beck as well as MSNBC political commentator Pat Buchanan. Two weeks ago Janet Murguia took on Lou Dobbs on his evening show.

Citizenship Blues

Three bits of news from the first two months of 2008 highlight the galling inconsistency and inadequacy of the federal government's system for turning immigrants into citizens.

The first is that the wait for citizenship and green cards is up — way up. Citizenship and Immigration Services reported in January that the average time to process a citizenship application had risen to 18 months, from seven, and that green cards would now take a year, instead of six months or less. ...

The second was the news last week that the agency had finally taken a baby step toward clearing its green-card backlogs by easing a rule on background checks by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The third development is the surge in businesses using E-Verify, the federal system for checking employees' immigration status. As more states and localities have adopted harsh

campaigns to purge undocumented immigrants, E-Verify has taken on a larger role, with 52,000 employers now using it, compared with 14,000 a year ago. President Bush's new budget includes \$100 million to expand E-Verify, which the citizenship agency calls "a cornerstone" of "long-term immigration reform."

You can tell a country's priorities from what works and where the money goes. With billions for border and workplace enforcement, the government has been rushing to impose ever more sophisticated and intrusive means to keep immigrants out. Yet it continues to tolerate a creaky, corrosively inept system for welcoming immigrants in — an underperforming bureaucracy that takes their money and makes them wait, with a chronic indolence that is just another form of hostility.

For the entire article, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/17/opinion/17sun2.html?_r=1&th&emc=th&oref=slogin

Source: New York Times Editorial

'Virtual Fence' Along Border To Be Delayed

The Bush administration has scaled back plans to quickly build a "virtual fence" along the U.S.-Mexico border, delaying completion of the first phase of the project by at least three years and shifting away from a network of tower-mounted sensors and surveillance gear, federal officials said...

To view the entire article, go to: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/27/AR2008022703747.html?referrer=emailarticle>

Source: Washington Post

Immigration Becoming Part of the Solution

With Sen. John McCain now in a clear lead for the Republican nomination, it is safe to say that the days of "deport them all" rhetoric regarding immigration are likely over in the presidential contest.

Yet, the anti-illegal immigrant sentiment will continue to loom large in this year's political

contests at the state and local level. What's more, immigration will remain so contentious around the country that Republican and Democratic insiders predict that comprehensive reform of the kind President Bush pursued but failed to pass will be a non-starter for at least the next four years.

But even if comprehensive immigration reform is off the political table, the time for a sober -- and realistic -- assessment of immigrants and their impact on the United States has already arrived. According to some demographers and urban planners, a serious discussion about immigration is taking place and in a different context: the unprecedented economic and societal demands caused by retiring baby boomers, the first of whom began drawing their Social Security checks this year.

Dowell Myers, author of "Immigrants and Boomers: Forging a New Social Contract for the Future of America," argues that policymakers will have to think of immigrants as part of a solution rather than a threat to America, as posited by many in recent years. A demographer at the University of Southern California who directs the Population Dynamics Research Group, Myers believes immigrants and their children will have to help the U.S. meet the huge costs of boomer retirement.

Myers is convinced that during the next president's watch "this will be a bigger, a more dominant concern ... than the Iraq War is today." Policymakers already are reconsidering many attitudes about retirement age, Social Security benefits and taxes. But nowhere will the thinking need to be more different than when it comes to immigration.

For the entire article, see: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/07/AR2008020701942.html>

Source: *Washington Post*

League of Women Voters Immigration Study

The League of Women Voters has recently launched a two-year Immigration Study aimed at helping communities understand the implications of immigration at the local, state, and

federal level. As part of this project, League members and leaders will explore the underlying values and principles regarding immigration, reasons for immigration, current federal immigration policy, and the impact of immigration in American society.

The study can be found at: <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=LWVUSImmigrationStudy>

Migrants Unlikely to End up in Prison REPORT LINKS FEW FOREIGN-BORN TO CRIME

Countering widespread belief, a new report shows California's foreign-born population - including illegal immigrants - makes up only a sliver of the state's population of inmates.

The report by the Public Policy Institute of California, released Monday, also suggests the foreign-born population, which makes up more than a third of the state's adults, plays a disproportionately smaller role in serious crime.

"Crime, Corrections, and California: What Does Immigration Have to Do with It?" gives one of the clearest glimpses yet into the impact of immigrants and immigration on the state's justice system.

It also aims to dispel the perception that cities with large foreign-born populations are criminal hot beds, with several California cities showing a dip in police activity amid recent immigration waves.

But while the findings are surprising, they don't account for a complete relationship between immigration and crime. The report did not, for example, examine petty crimes such as shoplifting and vandalism, which wouldn't necessarily result in jail time. The findings also do not take into consideration the effect that the children of immigrants might have on crime.

The entire article can be found at: http://www.mercurynews.com/news/ci_8365551?source=email

Source: *Mercury News*



Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Send your friends and family a free E-Greeting for St. Patrick's Day from the following website:

http://www.123greetings.com/events/saint_patricks_day/

NEWS FROM IRELAND

REPORT ON PRISON VISITS- JANUARY 2008

Kate Jackson, Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas

Six prisoners were visited in facilities in the Northeast (Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey). Five prisoners were visited in company with **Sister Christine Hennessey** of the Aisling Irish Community Centre in Yonkers, New York and one prisoner was visited in company with **Sister Marguerite Kelly** of the Irish Pastoral Centre in Quincy, Massachusetts. Both Sister Christine and Sister Marguerite visit prisoners throughout the year. **Father John McCarthy** of the Irish Pastoral Centre and **Father Michael Leonard** of Chicago Irish Immigrant Support have also visited some of these prisoners throughout the year.

Prisoner 1 is serving a life sentence. He is an Irish citizen who has applied for repatriation (transfer to Ireland to serve his sentence in an Irish prison) but this has been denied by the state authorities. He receives regular visits from Sister Kelly and Father McCarthy.

Prisoner 2 is serving a lengthy sentence in a Federal facility. He maintains that he is an Irish citizen. He has been visited in the past by Father Michael Leonard. Over the long years of his incarceration he has had very few visitors.

Prisoner 3 is also serving a lengthy sentence. He is a dual Irish/American citizen. His wife lives in the U.S. and visits him regularly so he is less isolated than some of the other prisoners visited.

Prisoner 4 is serving a 3 to 9 year sentence. He is an Irish/British citizen and will be deported when he is paroled or at the end of his sentence. He has no family in the U.S. and is very appreciative of regular visits from Sister Christine Hennessey and Father John McCarthy

Prisoner 5 is serving a lengthy sentence. He is a dual Irish/American citizen. He has applied for repatriation to Ireland but this has been denied on the basis that he is serving an indeterminate sentence. His mother, sister and nieces live in Ireland but cannot afford to travel to the U.S. to visit him. He receives occasional visits from elderly relatives in the U.S. and is dependent on Sister Christine Hennessey for regular visits.

Prisoner 6 will be deported at the end of his sentence in 2009. He is an Irish/British citizen. His family in Northern Ireland have not been able to visit him during his imprisonment. He is visited weekly by an American man from a local parish and has been visited by Sister Christine Hennessey.

All of the prisoners seemed to enjoy and appreciate the visits. Irish prisoners in the Northeast may be less isolated than elsewhere in the U.S. because they receive a high level of pastoral/Irish support which seems to be less available in other parts of the U.S. The visits were an excellent opportunity to assess ICPO interventions and to identify the gaps that exist in service delivery to our U.S. clients.

Good Friday Agreement

Former US president Bill Clinton will visit Northern Ireland to mark the 10th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr. Clinton will be joined by Senator George Mitchell, who played a crucial role in brokering the 1998 accord, at a special event in Belfast in April.

Northern Ireland First Minister Ian Paisley has not yet indicated whether he will attend the US-Ireland Alliance commemoration, which will be held at Queen's University.

However, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin will be attending.

Source: RTE News

Ireland's John Duddy a Throwback Fighter with a Modern Message

John Duddy broke into a wide grin, yanking the fluffy white beard off his chin. Here was Ireland's own, back home in Derry last December, dressed in a ridiculous Santa Claus outfit and smiling like a three-year-old just woken up on Christmas morning.

This is the promising fighter with the punishing punches and the unblemished record? This is the guy who sells out Madison Square Garden whenever he steps between the ropes, who's built a following in America's biggest city that reminds old-timers of a bygone era?

Turns out there's more to this middleweight contender than meets the eye - which, at the moment, would seem like quite a statement.

"He does so much for other people," said Adele McCourt, who works for the city of Derry, recalling the Santa getup to benefit charity. "Everybody loves him, very much so." Similar sentiments are felt across the pond, where the adopted New Yorker has created a massive following among the city's Irish immigrant population.

He's a reminder of boxing's "Golden Era," when big fights would draw tens of thousands to Yankee Stadium and Chicago Stadium. When Sugar Ray Robinson waged his epic battles against Kid Gavilan, Jake LaMotta and the toughest opponent of all, racism. And perhaps most importantly, when the city's melting pot would magically divide for a big fight, with Italians, Portuguese and Germans each backing their own.

"It is like a throwback, when New York was really the centre of the earth," said Duddy, who will fight unheralded Walid Smichet on the undercard of the Wladimir Klitschko-Sultan Ibragimov heavyweight title fight Feb. 23 at Madison Square Garden. "I think whenever I came along there was nothing there at all for the Irish American and the Irish man to support.

That unabashed love is one of the reasons Duddy has thrown his support to the New York-based **Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform**, attending meetings and wearing a T-shirt into the ring promoting the group's website, legalizetheirish.org. Duddy downplays his role in the campaign. He readily admits he doesn't understand American politics but figures if his people support him, the least he can do is support them....

Besides, the dashing young Irishman has had his own problems with the immigration service.

Realizing from a young age he wanted to be a professional boxer, Duddy moved to New York about four years ago in search of better trainers and better competition. When he went home for a visit, he learned he had overstayed his visa. It took months of wrangling to trim the red tape that allowed him to return to the U.S.

"People who come to work and are good citizens and didn't fill out the right paperwork, I look at it as personal," Duddy said through a thick brogue. "But again, I'm not a big influence on it.

"I wear a T-shirt and appear at some events. I sort of look at myself as everybody else."

For the entire article, go to: <http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5is7zq-rAj7-H-j9Xi5oolH6vjZHw>

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