

Update on The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

JFI Campaign Update

At this month's meeting Kevin Appleby gave a legislative update to the core members. The main Congressional action on immigration has been in the House where a discharge petition was filed by Thelma Drake (R-NC) on HR 4088 the Save America through Verification and Employment (SAVE) Act, better known as the "Shuler-Tancredo" bill. The Shuler-Tancredo bill is an enforcement-only proposal that would increase monies for border protection and detention and would mandate a nationwide employer verification system. Under House Rules, any petition that garners 218 signatures places a bill on the calendar for full House consideration outside of the regular committee process.

A JFI action alert asking people to contact their representatives over the Easter recess was sent to members of IAUSA. Before the adjournment, 181 Representatives had signed the discharge petition. Our goal was to contact those Democrats who had co-sponsored the original bill to ask them NOT to sign the discharge petition. In addition, we wanted to encourage moderate Republicans who had not signed on to the petition, to refrain.

To view the current list of signatories, go to <http://clerk.house.gov/110/lrc/pd/petitions/Dis5.htm>

Many other religious, immigrant, business, and legal organizations also mobilized their members to make phone calls and/or visits to offices during the recess.

Last week several of the JFI organizations visited offices to either thank the Representative for indicating that he/she would not sign the discharge petition and urged others NOT to sign.

It was a very fruitful effort and the group received word that in the majority of the offices visited, the Representatives would not sign the petition.



Bishops Meet with ICE Official

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration hosted a meeting on March 10 with Assistant Secretary Julie Myers of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to discuss the impact of immigration enforcement raids around the country. Assistant Secretary Myers heads the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency within DHS, which is charged with the enforcement of immigration law in the interior of the country.

Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the committee, stated that the tone of the meeting was not confrontational but cooperative. While acknowledging the right of the government to enforce the law, the committee told Assistant Secretary Myers that the use of raids should be minimized, if not abandoned altogether.

"We wanted to communicate our desire to work with the government to minimize the use of raids and to reduce the negative impact of the raids on immigrant families," said Bishop Wester. "We felt that the Assistant Secretary was willing to work more closely with us to prevent the separation of families and to protect children."

Over the past eighteen months, ICE has conducted worksite enforcement raids in such diverse areas as Greeley, Colorado; Grand Island, Nebraska; and New Bedford, Massachusetts. It also has conducted two raids

in Utah, in Logan and Linden, arresting more than 250 workers. During these raids children who are U.S. citizens have been separated from undocumented parents arrested during the raids.

“Our primary concern is to reduce the trauma that children experience when a parent is taken away suddenly,” said Bishop Wester. “We informed the Assistant Secretary that diocesan and Catholic Charities personnel are in a good position to help families in the aftermath of an enforcement action.”

Bishop Wester added that the discussion focused on common interests, as well, including the need for comprehensive immigration reform and the fight to end human trafficking. The committee also expressed opposition to enforcement activity focused on churches, hospitals, or social service programs on humanitarian grounds.

“We believe that Assistant Secretary Myers heard our concerns on this matter,” said Bishop Wester.

Source: Catholic News Service

A Foolish Immigration Purge

Leave it to the Bush administration to throw thousands of law-abiding American workers and companies off a cliff in perilous economic times.

That would be the effect of its decision to press ahead with a bad idea: to force businesses to fire employees whose names don't match the Social Security database. The purge is part of a campaign — along with scattershot workplace raids and the partial border fence — to make a show of tackling the broken immigration system.

For the entire article, go to:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/opinion/27thu2.html>

Source: New York Times – 3/27/08

Immigration and Social Security

Paul Krugman's column in the New York Times points out that in the 2008 report of the Social Security Trustees released today the "actuarial balance" of the system is better than it's

been since 1993. Interesting! But how much better?

Last year the trustees estimated that Social Security had an overall 75-year deficit of 1.95% of taxable payroll. This year it's 1.70%. That's a pretty substantial improvement. What caused it?

Table IV.B9 has only one significant change from 2007: "Methods and programmatic data." And what might that entail? Scroll down for the answer: **immigrants**. To be specific, better estimates of the taxes and benefits received by illegal immigrants — or, as the trustees refer to them, "other-immigrants".

For the entire article, see:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/politics/animal/main501763.shtml>

Source: CBS News

New Immigration Reform Proposal Being Prepared

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus says it is prepared to introduce a new immigration reform bill later this year which will confront Congress with the tricky issue of legal residency for 12 million undocumented workers in the middle of an election season, 1200 WOAI news reports.

U.S. Representative Joe Baca (D-California), the First Vice President of the CHC, revealed the measure today as he attended a meeting of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in San Antonio.

"We will be coming out specifically with the legislation later on," Baca said. "It will **not** be comprehensive in nature, but it would include the 12 to 14 million people who are here in the United States, it will address those individuals working in agriculture, and it will address the DREAM Act," Baca said.

Baca declined to reveal any more information, saying he 'wasn't ready' to provide the details of the bill and 'didn't want to be pushed' by reporters.

The Caucus members declined to say

when the new immigration reform measure might be introduced.

Customs and Border Protection Recruiting on U.S. bases in Germany

You can find Border Patrol recruiters at NASCAR races, football games and job fairs across the country. Now they're going overseas.

On March 25 Customs and Border Protection recruiters travelled to seven U.S. military bases in Germany, targeting retiring personnel. It is the first time the Border Patrol has taken their recruiting show overseas. Another recruiting mission is scheduled in May.

It's the latest wrinkle in the Border Patrol's rush to meet President Bush's mandate to nearly double the size of the agency. The Border Patrol, which had 12,000 agents in 2005, now has a record 15,500 agents on duty.

Officials are under pressure to field a total force of 18,319 by the end of the fiscal year in September. The ultimate goal is more than 20,000 agents.

The Border Patrol has long seen the military as fertile grounds for recruitment. About one-fourth of current agents are military veterans.

"We are reaching out to the military because, like CBP, the military is committed to service to country," Joe Arata, CBP's national recruiter said.

Source: Dallas Morning News

DHS Tries Again on Controversial Social Security Matching Program

The Homeland Security Department offered a lengthy defense of its proposed program that would force employers to fire workers whose names don't match their Social Security numbers, and said it would try again to have the rules enacted into law.

A federal judge in San Francisco blocked the rules in October, saying the proposal would likely impose hardships on businesses and their workers. Employers would incur new costs to

comply with the regulation that the government hasn't evaluated, and innocent workers unable to correct mistakes in their records in time would lose their jobs, U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer wrote.

In a 44-page "supplemental" document released late Friday, the department attempted to address several of the judge's concerns. Access the entire 44-page report here: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/press_nomatch-snpdm.pdf

Among other things, the document "outlines clear steps an employer may take in response to receiving a letter from the Social Security Administration indicating that an employee's name does not match the Social Security number on file," the department said. If businesses follow the guidance in the No-Match Rule, the department said they will have "safe harbor" from the letter being used against them.

The last line of the 44-page document says the department intends to "repromulgate, without change," the same set of rules the judge blocked in October.

Michael Chertoff said the department has also filed an appeal of the October ruling, and is pursuing both tracks—revised rules and the legal appeal—"simultaneously to get a resolution as quickly as possible."

The AFL-CIO, the American Civil Liberties Union and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce object to the program, saying it would foster discrimination on the work site, lead to job losses by lawful employees, and expose businesses to additional expenses and the fear of prosecution. Source: The Associated Press

The National Immigration Law Center has posted the following new documents on the no-match rule:

Summary of the rule – http://www.nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA_Related_Info/DHS_Final_Rule/SSA_no-match_summary_3-26-08.pdf

Talking points on the rule - http://www.nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA_Related_Info/DHS_Final_Rule/Why_the_DHS_rule_is_bad_2008-03-21.pdf

Facts on the no-match letter -
http://www.nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA-NM_Toolkit/factsaboutno-matchletter_2008-03-26.pdf

Immigrants Joining the Mainstream

Immigrants made the United States what it is. Being an American depends on acceptance of certain American ideals, not on the place of birth of a person or of his or her ancestors. This edition of **eJournal USA** tells the story of immigration and diversity as it has played out through the centuries and continues to play out now.

[eJournal USA: Immigrants Joining the Mainstream](#)

Source: U.S. Department of State

Border Insecurity

Let's agree that any country needs to control its borders and ports, and that this one has done too little on that front. But that worthy goal founders when the overall strategy boils down to simplistic components — bits of fencing and technological cure-alls — rather than a comprehensive solution that also attacks the reasons people cross illegally. Despite what critics of “amnesty” say, immigration reform has never been a choice between legalization and enforcement, because legalization is enforcement. Only by bringing people onto the books and being realistic about the supply of visas, letting people in through ports of entry, instead of chasing them across the desert, will the country restore sanity and order to this broken system.

For the entire article, go to:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/04/opinion/04tue1.html?_r=1&th&emc=th&oref=slogin

Source: New York Times

Goal Set for Reducing Backlog on Citizenship Applications

Immigration officials said on Friday (March 14) that they expected to complete about 930,000 citizenship applications in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, reducing a huge backlog in a time frame that would allow many new citizens to register to vote in the November elections.

Source: New York Times

House Panel Approves Extension of Religious Visas

Among several immigration bills a House Judiciary panel approved Wednesday was legislation to extend a visa program for religious workers scheduled to expire this year.

The Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security and International Law Subcommittee voted 8-1 to refer the legislation (HR 5570) to the full Judiciary Committee.

By voice vote, the panel adopted a substitute amendment by the bill's sponsor, Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., to limit a permanent extension proposed in the original bill to seven years and require the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service to issue guidelines on preventing visa fraud.

The visa program was established in 1990 (PL 101-649) as part of a broader immigration bill. It provides so-called R1 visas to churches, synagogues and mosques to sponsor qualified foreigners to fill non-ministerial religious jobs. In early 2007, the Citizenship and Immigration Service announced it had uncovered high levels of fraudulent applications for the visa program.

The Lofgren amendment also contains a provision to automatically renew the visa program until 2016 if the agency's fraud prevention guidelines had been satisfactorily implemented by Dec. 31, 2009. King, the sole “no” vote against the bill, said some of the applicant organizations “exist solely as a means of carrying out immigration fraud” adding the R1 visa “has already been linked to terrorism.”

A bill (HR 5060) to allow foreign professional athletes to apply for visa extension every five years was approved by voice vote. Under current law, athlete visa holders must attain permanent resident status after 10 years or leave the country. A bill (HR 5571) to extend visa waivers for foreign medical graduates and legislation (HR 5569) to extend a pilot program for immigrant investors also were approved by voice vote.

Source: CQ Today Online News

Knights of Columbus Founder Declared Venerable

The founder of the Knights of Columbus was declared venerable by Benedict XVI, furthering his process toward possibly becoming the first American-born priest to be canonized.

The Pope approved Saturday a decree recognizing the heroic virtue of Father Michael McGivney. "All of us who are members of the Knights of Columbus are profoundly grateful for this recognition of the holiness of our founder," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "The strength of the Knights of Columbus today is a testament to his timeless vision, his holiness and his ideals."

Worried about the religious faith and financial stability of *immigrant* families, Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus with the help of several men of St. Mary's Parish in New Haven in 1882 to help strengthen the faith of the men of his parish and to provide financial assistance in the event of their death to the widows and orphans they left behind. He was also known for his tireless work among his parishioners.

Michael McGivney was born in Connecticut in 1852 to parents who were natives of Ireland and immigrants to the United States. From an early age, he realized a calling to the priesthood and was ordained in 1877 in Baltimore, Maryland. His cause for canonization was opened in December 1997.

Source: Zenit

Senators Form Anti-Immigration Caucus

Anti-immigration members in the House have long had their membership organization, the so-called [Immigration Reform Caucus](#), until recently headed by failed Presidential candidate Tom Tancredo (R-CO). On March 5th, Senator David Vitter (R-LA) announced the formation of a Senate counterpart, the [Border Security and Enforcement First Caucus](#), which he will chair. Members of the caucus include many of the Senators who led the filibuster against immigration reform in 2007—**Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Jim DeMint (R-SC), James Inhofe (R-OK), Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), Richard Burr (R-NC),**

Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Roger Wicker (R-MS), and Mike Enzi (R-WY). In announcing the formation of the caucus, Senator Vitter said the caucus will be dedicated to enforcement "first." In his [statement](#), Vitter did not make mention of reforming our immigration laws so that families may be reunited more quickly, or so that immigrants coming to work may do so legally. Instead, he touted the benefits of "attrition through enforcement," a concept promoted by anti-immigrant groups to make life miserable enough in the U.S. for undocumented immigrants so that they will leave of their own accord.

The Road to Dystopia

The search for a silver bullet to slay illegal immigration continues. Hard-liners are turning the country upside down looking for it.

They are looking in Washington, where Senate Republicans last week offered more than a dozen bills to further enshrine mass deportation as the national immigration strategy. It is a grab bag of enforcement measures that will be useful for tough-talking campaign commercials, but will not actually solve anything.

Republicans and some Democrats in the House are trying to force a vote on a bad bill called the SAVE Act, which among other things would force all workers, including citizens, to prove they have a right to earn a living — a bad idea compounded by the notoriously bad state of federal government records.

The harsh-enforcement virus has spread far beyond the Capitol. In states like Oklahoma, laws have been enacted to force illegal immigrants further underground, off official registries and into anonymity, by denying them identification like driver's licenses. In a growing number of states and counties, politicians are offering up police officers to the federal government for immigration poses. From Prince William County, Va., to Maricopa County, Ariz., officers who pull people over for minor traffic infractions are checking immigration papers, too.

This is a country that runs on routine amnesties. Where would the courts be without plea bargains, or state budgets without periodic tax forgiveness? Are illegal immigrants the one

class of undesirables for whom common sense, proportionality, discernment, good judgment and compassion are unthinkable?

It is frightening to think that this country's answer could be an emphatic yes. For the entire article, go to:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/opinion/13thu1.html?_r=1&th&emc=th&oref=slogin

Source: *New York Times*

Report Links Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in the US to Rise in Hate Groups

A leading U.S. civil rights organization says anti-immigrant sentiment is fueling a nationwide increase in hate groups and hate crimes against Latinos.

A new report from the Southern Poverty Law Center says 888 hate groups operated in the United States last year, an increase of 48 percent since 2000. It cites FBI statistics showing a 35 percent increase in reported anti-Latino hate crimes between 2003 and 2006. The report says the increase is linked to anti-immigrant activism.

Among the additions to the center's list of hate groups is an organization called the Federation for American Immigration Reform. Its president Dan Stein rejected the hate group label, saying his organization has been smeared.

The Southern Poverty Law Center alleges the group spreads conspiracy theories and racist propaganda about immigrants, and that it has a history of ties to white supremacist groups and ideology. But the federation says it advocates an end to illegal immigration and supports tighter controls over legal immigration.

Source: *Voice of America*

NEWS FROM IRELAND

Call to Assist Irish Prisoners Abroad

The Bishop of Derry and chairman of the Bishops' Council for Emigrants, Séamus Hegarty, has urged the Government to honour a commitment to assist Irish prisoners abroad.

In a St. Patrick's Day message, he said the Government-sponsored *Report on Irish Prisoners Abroad* - published last August - presented "a disturbing snapshot of the conditions, problems and issues faced by prisoners and their families". He said that the Government should implement the report's recommendations in full and "do all it can to alleviate the anxiety and hardship experienced by this most vulnerable group of emigrants".

The Government was "critical in the development of policy and the provision of financial resources to those who provide outreach to our vulnerable migrants". "There is a growing awareness of the implications of migration both for the migrant, and for sending and receiving societies," he added.

At the time of the report's publication, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern said that he was "sympathetic" to the idea of a hardship fund for Irish prisoners abroad. In his address, Dr. Hegarty also urged people to "be fully at home in our own faith tradition".

"Faith and religious belief have too conveniently been ushered into the realm of the personal and private domains," he said, adding that St Patrick came to Ireland with "openness to our traditions" and people needed to take him as a model, while being "able to dialogue confidently with those of other faith traditions".

As Ireland evolved into a "new phase of growth and development, we are more than ever called to identify our values and our traditions of belief that are foundational to human dignity and to a civilised, caring society," he added.

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Geri Garvey, Administrator
Irish Apostolate, USA
1005 Downs Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Phone/Fax: 301-384-3375
Email: administrator@usairish.org
Website: www.usairish.org