

JFI Campaign Update

The new campaign manager, Antonio Cube, announced that the **Justice for Immigrants** website is being updated in order to make information more user-friendly and to encourage visitors to the site to sign on to for advocacy action alerts. The JFI Committee organizations are working to develop a strong and clear message for the public that will resonate in order to get more people willing to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform.

On May 8 several members of the JFI Legislative Strategy Team visited members in the House of Representatives to thank certain Congressional members for not signing onto the discharge petition on the SAVE Act. (HR 4088) "Shuler-Tancredo" bill.

The House Democratic Leadership has scheduled hearings this month with regard to specific sections of HR 4088, i.e. employment verification, detention, which will give legislators an opportunity to hear more of the pros and cons of what is being proposed under the legislation.

As part of the National Migration Conference at the end of July in Washington, attendees will participate in an advocacy day on Capitol Hill.

Bishop of Brownsville Testifies at Hearing on "Wall" selected comments

"We oppose the construction of the wall because one-dimensional solutions may be simple, but they are often illusions and can make things worse. No fence we can build will be long enough or high enough to wall out the human and economic forces that drive undocumented immigrants into our country. We oppose the wall

because immigration policies that begin and end at our borders will not be successful. We oppose the wall because it poses a serious threat of increased flooding in our region in the event of a hurricane, which on this coast is not a possibility, but a reality. We oppose this wall because residents of the Valley—and visitors from across the country—stand to lose the opportunity to visit the vibrant wildlife areas unique to our Valley, places where all can discover and connect with God's creation and with one another. I have, therefore, supported Valley Interfaith's petition against the Border Wall and have invited parishes in the diocese to support it, as well. To date over 10,000 registered voters have signed this petition.

Instead of a wall, we need Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Instead of a wall, we need national policies that help overcome the pervasive poverty and deprivation, violence and oppression that push people to leave their own homes. We need policies that promote family unity, debt reduction, economic development, foreign aid and fair global trade. These are essential elements that the Church recommends for effective comprehensive immigration reform."

Sister of Mercy Speaks Out Against Iowa Raid

On Tuesday, May 20, Sister of Mercy Kathy Thill spoke at a press conference about what happened in Postville, Iowa when 390 of approximately 2,300 residents were arrested and detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Below are her remarks.

My name is Sister Kathy Thill and I am a Sister of Mercy who works with the Latino community of Iowa. I am also a United States citizen who grew up believing that this is a democratic country in which the dignity of all

people is respected and their rights protected. That is not the country I experienced this past week.

I share my experience with the hope that it will help lawmakers and my fellow citizens see that our nation's immigration policies and practices are broken and inhumane. We need comprehensive immigration reform which includes a pathway to lawful permanent residence and citizenship, meets immigrants' basic needs, encourages family unity and reunification and addresses the root causes of migration.

To read the entire article, go to:

http://www.sistersofmercy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1385&Itemid=193

U.S. Bishops Weigh in on Immigration; Others call Legal Efforts 'theater'

Bishops in Connecticut and Seattle marked the feast of St. Joseph the Worker May 1 with calls to welcome immigrants and encourage broad immigration law and policy reforms. In their statement, the bishops who make up the Connecticut Catholic Conference cautioned against demonizing undocumented immigrants and said that, while the government has a right and obligation to control its borders, "faith must unite us to the more important values of love, hospitality, keeping families together and respecting every person's human dignity." In Seattle, Archbishop Alex J. Brunett sent a statement to participants in an immigrants' rights march May 1, echoing Pope Benedict XVI's call at the United Nations April 18 to promote human rights as a way of eliminating inequalities and increasing security. A few days later, a U.S. House subcommittee held a hearing related to a controversial employment eligibility verification system, the subject of a bill that also would authorize hiring another 8,000 Border Patrol agents and otherwise expand enforcement of immigration laws. The National Immigration Forum, an immigrant rights organization, said election-year legislation such as the Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement, or SAVE, Act, being considered by the House Ways and Means Committee, is "more like Kabuki theater than serious policy deliberation."

Source: Catholic News Service

In the media: TG4 focuses on work of emigrant chaplains

A TG4 production on the work of emigrant chaplains was aired this month, and is now available on the station's archives. The show, "Séiplinigh na nImirceach" consisted of four episodes focusing on the work of the Emigrant Chaplaincy Scheme in the US and Britain, and drew parallels with immigrants in Ireland today. One of those interviewed was Ean board member As Chaplains they were there to provide pastoral care to the emigrants but more often found themselves much more deeply involved in the lives of the emigrants than they could possibly have imagined. For many emigrants the Chaplain was seen as a first port of call, to sort accommodation, and employment and to deal with the difficulties many young Irish found themselves in a strange land. In recent years, we have become very aware of our 'Diaspora' and their role in the development of today's Ireland. In this series, the Chaplains have the opportunity to tell their own side of the emigration story. We also hear from the emigrants themselves, those who have stayed abroad and those who returned.

The fourth programme follows **Fr. Michael Leonard on his rounds in Chicago** – a particularly Irish city. His brief is to work with newly arrived and undocumented Irish, but the old established Irish community (and their children) still welcome the connection with the Irish priest. We feature contributions from the older Irish-American community who had to leave Ireland and the newer generation who are in USA by choice.

Watch the programmes online! They are **subtitled, in case your Irish is rusty**. Here is how to find them:

1. Go to www.tg4.tv.
2. On the left, click on "Cláir Eile - Cartlann"
3. Scroll down until you see each of the four episodes of "Séiplinigh na nImirceach".

Source: EAN

A Recipe for Weakness

Thanks to the nation's dysfunctional immigration system and the dysfunctional Congress that keeps it that way, tens of thousands of promising, intelligent, ambitious and highly skilled foreign professionals, including thousands receiving advanced degrees from American universities this month, will be denied a chance to contribute their expertise and energy to the American economy. Few policies match this one in terms of sheer irrationality, and few will do as much damage to this country's long-term prospects and competitiveness. Yet Congress, mired in a political swamp of its own making when it comes to immigration, seems incapable of extracting itself.

To read the entire article, go to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/03/AR2008060303102.html>

Source: Washington Post

About time!

Reckless TV Anchors put on Spot

By ANDRES OPPENHEIMER

Bravo! A new study has found widespread fear-mongering and reckless journalism by cable television hosts such as CNN's Lou Dobbs and Fox News' Bill O'Reilly, who have made a career of bashing Hispanic undocumented immigrants and their home countries.

Also good news: Likely Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama told me in an interview last week that he shares concerns "about the anti-immigrant tenor that I have seen in some of the broadcasts," which are helping create a climate of hatred against Hispanics.

The study by Media Matters Action Network, a watchdog group, says Dobbs, O'Reilly and CNN's Glenn Beck serve up steady anger, resentment and myths "seemingly geared toward creating anti-immigrant hysteria."

Among the myths perpetuated in these broadcasts are the notions that undocumented Hispanic immigrants are responsible for a crime wave in the United States, that they consume a disproportionate amount of social services and

don't pay taxes, that Mexicans are somehow conspiring to take over the United States and that undocumented immigrants are bringing leprosy to the United States.

When I asked Obama about these shows, he expressed concern about "the poisonous atmosphere" that they have helped create. He added, "As a consequence, we've seen hate crimes rise against people of Hispanic descent. It is very important for the next president to show leadership, and explain that we are a nation of immigrants, and that our diversity is a strength and not a weakness."

The campaign of likely Republican candidate Sen. John McCain, who has also been strongly criticized for his immigration stands on these shows, declined to comment on the report, his campaign's press office said.

My opinion: These wild broadcasts are a shame on reputable networks such as CNN and Fox News and an embarrassment to our profession. They should either ask these Hispanic-phobic showmen to present both sides of the story, or present their shows as "opinion" talk shows.

For the record, this column -- like all my columns -- is published under the label "in my opinion." These television networks should air these shows under equally unambiguous labels.

Source: MIAMI HERALD

McCain Resumes Talk of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

UNION CITY, Calif. -- Surrounded by high-tech entrepreneurs, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said this morning he would expand visas for immigrants at the same time he would propose legislation cracking down on illegal immigration.

The declaration -- which came as several Silicon Valley CEOs complained about the need for highly skilled employees -- marked a slight shift from what McCain had said while campaigning to secure his party's nomination. During the GOP primary McCain -- whose support for bipartisan immigration reform proved to be a liability within his own party -- said he would

clamp down on illegal aliens before doing any other immigration reform.

"I believe we have to secure our borders. But we must enact comprehensive immigration reform, and we must make it a top priority," McCain told the chief executives of several high-tech companies. "We must make the best of this problem, and we must attract the best and brightest minds to this nation."

Shellye Archambeau, CEO of the software company MetricStream, told McCain she was worried about the decline in H1B visas, which go to highly skilled workers, as well as the fact that foreign students earning graduate degrees here are leaving the United States in increasing numbers.

"We should give them a diploma and staple a visa right at the same time, so they can stay," she said, prompting applause from the audience "The key point here is immigration has fueled the growth and innovation of this country since its founding."

Source: Washington Post

No Rebates for You

Immigrant restrictionism is stiffing hundreds of thousands of American citizens and legal residents out of their tax-rebate checks.

Hard-liners were so intent on keeping the cash out of the hands of undocumented workers that they restricted the rebate to people with Social Security numbers. An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, issued by the Internal Revenue Service to people who pay taxes but do not qualify for Social Security numbers, will not do. If a married couple files jointly, and one spouse is not eligible for the rebate, neither gets the money.

This hurts all manner of people who are working and paying taxes: American soldiers stationed abroad who happen to have married foreigners; high-tech immigrants in Silicon Valley and other places whose spouses are not authorized to work or have not yet had their paperwork processed. These are people who are perfectly legal, economically vital and politically inconvenient.

The government should fix the law so spouses get their money. It is a technical repair that even this Congress should manage. But why shouldn't undocumented immigrants with taxpayer numbers get the cash too? The checks are not rewards for good behavior; they are taxes returned as a means to an end. Illegal immigrants constitute about 5 percent of the work force and earn much less than the native-born. They are just the sort of group the stimulus should be aimed at, if the purpose is to get the most economic bang for every rebate dollar.

To read the entire article, go to:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/15/opinion/15thu1.html?th&emc=th>

Source: New York Times

Senate Judiciary Moves to Expedite Citizenship for Military Personnel, Veterans

The Senate Judiciary Committee is scheduled to mark up a measure Thursday (May 8) that would expedite naturalization applications for military personnel and veterans seeking to become U.S. citizens.

To speed the gathering of required information, the bill (S2840) would create an FBI liaison office within the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) agency, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

The bill calls for the government to process applications from military personnel within six months or provide the applicant with an explanation for the delay and an estimated date for completion.

The push to expedite the citizenship process for permanent residents serving in the armed forces is a priority that has gained broad support in the otherwise divisive debate over immigration policies.

USCIS would not comment specifically on the legislation, but a spokeswoman said that the agency already works closely with the FBI and has several special services in place to expedite military applications. Those include a no-fee rule for members of the military and a special office in

Nebraska through which naturalization applications from military personnel are routed.

Source: Congressional Quarterly

Study Says Foreigners In U.S. Adapt Quickly

Immigrants of the past quarter-century have been assimilating in the United States at a notably faster rate than did previous generations, according to a study released today.

Modern-day immigrants arrive with substantially lower levels of English ability and earning power than those who entered during the last great immigration wave at the turn of the 20th century. The gap between today's foreign-born and native populations remains far wider than it was in the early 1900s and is particularly large in the case of Mexican immigrants, the report said.

The study, sponsored by the [Manhattan Institute](#), a New York think tank, used census and other data to devise an assimilation index to measure the degree of similarity between the United States' foreign-born and native-born populations. These included civic factors, such as rates of U.S. citizenship and service in the military; economic factors, such as earnings and rates of homeownership; and cultural factors, such as English ability and degree of intermarriage with U.S. citizens. The higher the number on a 100-point index, the more an immigrant resembled a U.S. citizen.

In general, the longer an immigrant lives in the United States, the more characteristics of native citizens he or she tends to take on, said Jacob L. Vigdor, a professor at [Duke University](#) and author of the study. During periods of intense immigration, such as from 1870 to 1920, or during the immigration wave that began in the 1970s, new arrivals tend to drag down the average assimilation index of the foreign-born population as a whole.

To read the entire article, go to:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/12/AR2008051202575.html>

Source: Washington Post

The Order is in South Dakota for Irish Priest with Immigration Woes

Father Cathal Gallagher is bringing his parishioners in rural South Dakota an unwelcome lesson in the fine details of U.S. immigration law as they try to help him fight his pending deportation.

Father Gallagher, 58, a Columban missionary, went to the state a decade ago at the invitation of Bishop Robert J. Carlson, then-head of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, S.D. The Irish priest currently is pastor of parishes in three prairie towns, the largest of which is St. Thomas Aquinas in DeSmet, population just over 1,000.

After spending 22 years working in Japan, Father Gallagher was surprised by how taken he was with South Dakota, he told [Catholic News Service](#) in a May 29 phone interview.

"I liked this place, the prairies, the people," he said, and as soon as he was eligible, he applied for permanent U.S. residency. He came as close as being told five years ago that his "green card" was approved and would arrive within two weeks, only to learn much later that his application was actually denied.

Now, unless the Department of Homeland Security office of Citizenship and Immigration Services, or CIS, can be persuaded to reverse its denial of his application, Father Gallagher will have to head back to Ireland by July 1.

After spending most of his priesthood in Japanese missions, the native of Donegal, Ireland, came to the United States in 1996 to participate in an alcohol treatment program at Guest House in Rochester, Minn., he explained. He stayed on for a year afterward, during which he became acquainted with Bishop Carlson, who was undergoing cancer treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. (Bishop Carlson is now head of the Diocese of Saginaw, Mich.)

At the bishop's urging, he decided to give ministry in rural South Dakota a try. At first, Father Gallagher held a religious worker's visa. But in 2001 he submitted the paperwork for permanent U.S. residency.

"I kind of had my heart set," he said. "Yes,

this is where I'd like to spend the rest of my career."

What followed has become a seven-year adventure in the U.S. immigration system, with help throughout the process from the Sioux Falls Diocese and a Washington-based attorney with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, known as CLINIC. Despite that expertise, Father Gallagher said he only recently learned that his application had been denied because CIS concluded he had fallen "out of status" for a matter of weeks.

Anne Marie Gibbons, director of CLINIC's program for religious worker visas, did not work on Father Gallagher's case. However, explaining some of the general problems she and her staff encounter, she said it's common for someone's visa that authorizes him to live and work in the U.S. to expire while he's waiting to hear the results of an application for another visa or for permanent residency.

Gibbons said religious workers are especially prone to out-of-status problems because, unlike other categories of workers or family-visa holders, they are not permitted to submit simultaneous applications that might protect them from a lapse in coverage. It can take years for some kinds of visa applications to be processed. Recently, backlogged fingerprint checks alone have bogged down cases for as long as four or five years.

The problem is one of a variety of issues with religious worker visas that CLINIC has been trying to get the federal government to address as it reworks regulations for the visas. They were outlined in a May 15 letter to U.S. bishops from the chairman of their migration committee, Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, and Coadjutor Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., who is chairman of the CLINIC board of directors.

Father Gallagher recognizes that as a missionary priest he perhaps is being called to minister somewhere else in the world. But at the same time he hopes he will get to stay -- he hasn't started packing yet -- and is pursuing whatever threads of possibilities he's given.

Patti Ward, a St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner, hosted a meeting at her house May 29 with Father Gallagher and staff members of

Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D., who are trying to persuade CIS to reopen the case. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., also phoned Father Gallagher, offering to ask the White House to intervene.

"We're keeping hopeful that something can be done," Ward said. "But we can see the writing on the wall."

The same day, a prayer service at St. Thomas Aquinas drew hundreds of people, she said, packing the church with Catholics from the four parishes Father Gallagher has served, as well as ministers from local churches and others from the area.

Both Ward and Father Gallagher said his immigration problems have been eye-opening for the community.

"None of us has ever been involved in immigration problems," Ward said. "Some people don't want to understand. They're just mad."

Not only are they angry that their beloved pastor may have to leave, but some see the Latino immigrant workers at nearby dairy farms and factories and make comparisons, said Ward.

"They don't understand how (the Latinos) can be in the U.S. and Father can't," she said.

Father Gallagher, however, said that "here in the Dakotas' people's eyes have been opened that No. 1, you don't have to have a Hispanic face or speak Spanish to have immigration problems, and No. 2, the government system isn't working as it should."

Source: Catholic News Service

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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