



ARIZONA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

DIOCESE OF GALLUP • DIOCESE OF PHOENIX • DIOCESE OF TUCSON
HOLY PROTECTION OF MARY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

July 22, 2021

The Honorable Mark Kelly
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Kelly:

We write at this crucial moment to express our support for immigration reform and to ask that you commit to working toward the enactment this year of immigration reform legislation that includes legalization and a path to citizenship for Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, seasonal agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers. We further urge that you do so without also enacting provisions that would jeopardize family immigration as the cornerstone of our legal immigration system, rollback existing protections for vulnerable migrants, or impose harsh measures that would deprive migrants of due process.

In March, a bipartisan majority of the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act, and H.R. 1603, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. Together, these bills would provide much-needed relief to Dreamers, TPS/DED holders, and seasonal agricultural workers. In addition to those two measures, also pending in the Senate are S. 264, the Dream Act, which was introduced by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Lindsay Graham (R-SC), and S. 306, the SECURE Act, which was introduced by Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). The Dream Act would provide permanent protection with a path to citizenship for Dreamers, and the SECURE Act would provide a path to citizenship to longtime residents with TPS/DED.

Dreamers, TPS/DED holders, and seasonal agricultural workers are integral members of our country and our communities, but many—even those living in the United States for a decade or more—are unable to fully integrate into our society as permanent residents and citizens. Nevertheless, they pay billions of dollars in local, state, and federal taxes. Many serve the United States in the armed forces. Many others work as educators, health care professionals, and food supply chain workers. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of undocumented essential workers have been key in combating the virus and supporting the basic needs of us all, often putting themselves and their families at risk.

When the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 was enacted into law, the Catholic bishops of the United States affirmed, “It is against the common good and unacceptable to have a double society, one visible with rights and one invisible without rights—a voiceless underground of undocumented persons.”¹ This message remains as true today as it was almost ²35 years ago.

¹ Written Testimony of The Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, at p. 4 (June 15, 2021), <https://bit.ly/3xrUxXf>.

Unfortunately, many barriers and shortcomings in our immigration system continue to have negative impacts on families and communities. As a country, we can do better.

The Catholic Church believes in protecting the dignity of every human being, regardless of immigration status. My brother bishops have long supported immigration reform efforts to allow those who are contributors to our economy, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes to come forward and fully integrate into American life. It is both our moral duty and in our nation's best interest to recognize the contributions of so many hardworking immigrants and allow them to reach their God-given potential. As a country, we cannot persist in relegating to the margins those who are already integral members of our society—Americans in practice, if not on paper.

Once again, we urge your full support for enactment this year of immigration reform legislation that would allow Dreamers, TPS/DED holders, seasonal agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers to integrate as fully recognized members of our society. It is preferable that this be done on a bipartisan basis, and we are encouraged that a bipartisan group is working in the Senate on immigration reform. As mentioned, the House has already passed bipartisan legislation that would serve as an excellent foundation for further Senate action. However, should the Senate prove unable to move those House-passed bills forward as stand-alone measures, we urge you to support including the key provisions of them in other legislation considered by the Senate.

Finally, we implore you to work toward a comprehensive legislative reform of our immigration laws, which our country so desperately needs. To truly serve the common good, any such reform would need to preserve family unity, honor due process, promote respect for the rule of law, recognize the contributions of foreign-born workers, defend the vulnerable, and address the root causes of migration.

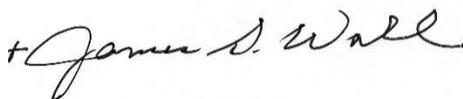
Thank you for your service to our country and the state of Arizona.



Most Rev. Eduardo A. Nevares
Auxiliary Bishop of Phoenix



Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix



Most Rev. James S. Wall
Bishop of Gallup



Most Rev. Edward J. Weisenburger
Bishop of Tucson



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July 22, 2021

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Sinema:

We write at this crucial moment to express our support for immigration reform and to ask that you commit to working toward the enactment this year of immigration reform legislation that includes legalization and a path to citizenship for Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, seasonal agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers. We further urge that you do so without also enacting provisions that would jeopardize family immigration as the cornerstone of our legal immigration system, rollback existing protections for vulnerable migrants, or impose harsh measures that would deprive migrants of due process.

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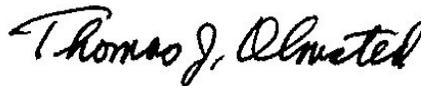
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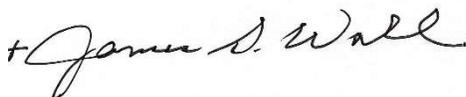
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