



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

July 31, 2013

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to urge you and your colleagues to approve comprehensive immigration reform legislation in the House as quickly as possible.

CHA was pleased to support the comprehensive reform bill in the Senate (S. 744), which passed with an encouraging amount of bipartisan support. That legislation above all would provide a real and workable path to citizenship for millions of immigrants, a provision that remains the highest priority for the Catholic health ministry and our partners within our Church community. We agree, along with the bishops of the U.S. Catholic Church, that such a program would help stabilize the workforce, promote family unity and bring the undocumented population more fully into their communities.

As health care providers, we also urge you to ensure that no immigration reform legislation in the House will jeopardize the health and safety of those whom it seeks to legalize. There should be no new or additional restrictions in the legislation, such as new waiting periods or exclusions from eligibility, to the existing eligibility rules for immigrants under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance program (CHIP). Additionally, we hope that a comprehensive reform bill will consider individuals who obtain lawful permanent resident status after completion of any provisional status to have met the current five-year waiting period for federal benefit programs.



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Thank you for your attention and focus on this important issue. CHA looks forward to working with you in the future to make comprehensive immigration reform a pathway to improving the health and lives of everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO