

March 30, 2006

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), I am requesting your support the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 as passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 27, 2006.

CHA, the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, believes that immigration reform must include provisions that are family-based, and include programs for temporary workers and earned legalization for those already in the country. The bill approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee strikes an important balance by providing appropriate measures for enforcement along with provisions that will help immigrants continue to be productive members of our nation's economy.

We are particularly pleased that the Committee bill includes an amendment offered by Senator Richard Durbin that will ensure hospitals, health care providers and other charitable organizations will not be prosecuted for providing humanitarian assistance to an undocumented person. As representatives of the Catholic health ministry, we believe that any measure punishing those who would offer aid to another human being would be an affront to our religious and social justice tradition and contradict the charitable nature of all Americans.

Additionally, we support the inclusion in the bill of the provisions providing for an earned legalization program for immigrants currently in the country as the best and most equitable solution. CHA, which supported the immigration reform legislation offered by Senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy, is pleased to see that measures regarding earned legalization are included in the Committee approved bill.

As the Senate considers various amendments to immigration reform legislation, I urge you to protect the integrity of the bill passed by the Committee and reject any amendments that would weaken the Committee's comprehensive approach to immigration reform. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Michael Rodgers
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES



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