



News from the Diocese of Joliet

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Submitted by Tom Garlitz

Immigration Rally in Joliet

A prayer service and immigration rally was held last month in Joliet at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Hundreds attended the event, which was part of the "United Families" tour, launched by Congressman Luis Gutierrez.

The ecumenical event with faith and community leaders began with marches starting from local churches and walking onto Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Once gathered at Mount Carmel, a number of clergy offered prayers, followed by testimonies of families who have been affected by deportations. The group came together to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform and an end to the separation of families.

Further information on the event can be found in the *Joliet Herald News*:
http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/heraldnews/news/1489612.4_1_JO22_RALLY_S1.article

Delegation of immigrant advocates and faith leaders deliver letter to Rep. Biggert - Proposed Housing Bill Would Harm Families, Children

Reprinted from Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

A delegation of immigrant advocates from the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) along with faith leaders representing the Diocese of Joliet, Pax Christi DuPage and various faith communities of DuPage County delivered a letter to US Rep. Judy Biggert (R-Illinois) that expresses their disappointment on an ill-considered bill that Rep. Biggert has introduced,

HR 1295.

HR 1295 would provide mortgage relief for homeowners, but only if the homeowner is a US citizen or green card holder. If this bill were to become law, refugees, asylees, high-skilled workers in the process of getting green cards, and other legal immigrants would be excluded. In addition, US-born children of immigrants would face homelessness solely because of the immigration status of their parents.

"Especially now, in times of economic downturn, denying housing to people that can afford to pay for it, would greatly hurt our local economies," said Joshua Hoyt, ICIRR Executive Director. "It is very disappointing that Rep. Biggert would think that this bill would be good policy for our families, our communities, and our nation."

Legislative Update: State & Federal

English as a Second Language funding

The Illinois General Assembly has returned from its spring break and will be focusing on the FY 2010 budget. The Catholic Conference of Illinois

(CCI) will continue to advocate for \$2 million in additional funding to be included in the budget for English as a Second Language classes that can be provided by parishes and community organizations.

Federal Legislation: DREAM Act

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would provide a legalization process for

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News from the Archdiocese of Chicago

Submitted by Elena Segura

CARDINAL GEORGE TO OBAMA: END RAIDS, WORK ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

*** "This will be a clear sign that this administration is truly about change", the Cardinal said.***
On March 21st, almost 2,000 faithful and over 15 media outlets gathered inside the sanctuary and basement of Our Lady of Mercy Church for prayer, immigrant testimonials, Cardinal Francis George's statement, and petitioning to President Obama to stop raids and work towards compassionate comprehensive immigration reform. The assembly included over 30 busloads of parishioners from across the archdiocese, dozens of priests and religious sisters and brothers, evangelical leaders and inter-faith participants. You may have seen or heard the extensive local multi-media coverage and national and international syndications through AP, Reuters and EPE. See this link <http://www.americancatholic.org/News/newsreport.aspx?id=862> for coverage and excerpts from

Cardinal George, whose message (as President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) to end the raids and to work towards compassionate reform was headlined across the world.

The Cardinal's message at the March 21st Prayer Forum was strong and clear in emphasizing the sacredness of the family unit joined by God; it was so needed by the immigrant community to receive the hope and solidarity of the Church. It was also important for the Obama administration to know the Church is speaking up on the devastations the undocumented community is experiencing, and to make President Obama accountable for his campaign promises. Thank you to all who joined with us, either in person or prayerful solidarity. Special thanks to the event organizers from the Priests for Justice for Immigrants and the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants; to the staff and volunteers of Our Lady of Mercy Parish and Albany Park Neighborhood Council for their wonderful hospitality and support; and to Congressman Luis

Gutierrez for his participation.

3RD ANNUAL ROSARY AT MCHENRY COUNTY JAIL

The 3rd Annual Praying of the Rosary for immigrant detainees, deportees and their families took place on Palm Sunday, April 5 at the McHenry County Jail, in Woodstock, Illinois. At any time, there are as many as 400 immigrants held by ICE in the McHenry County Jail. Visitation by family is very limited and only by tele-video. Detainees are held as prisoners in very depressing conditions and often lose hope, sign away their rights and accept deportation. There has been at least one death at the McHenry County Jail, that of Hasiba Balbachir, a young asylum seeker from Algeria, found hung in her cell.

Nationally, there have been at least 77 deaths in ICE custody over the last 5 years. Last year ICE deported more than 360,000 immigrants, many who have lived in the United States for years, and who have close family ties in our country.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO TO LAUNCH ST. TORIBIO ROMO IMMIGRANT CENTER

The Archdiocese of Chicago and the Department of Evangelization, Catechesis and Worship announce the launch of the St. Toribio Romo Immigrant Center. The Immigrant Center will serve the Pilsen-Little Village parish cluster in collaboration with pastors, priests, religious sisters and brothers, lay leaders, Catholic Charities and other partners. The formal dedication of the center will take place on May 20 at Assumption BVM Parish (California and 24th St.), where the center's administrative office will be located.

The Immigrant Center is set up as a Liaison Group within the Department of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Worship, in order to assure the center fulfills its core mission of evangelization. The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform (CCIR), which gave birth to this immigrant center, will continue its complementary advocacy and educational programs at an archdiocesan level.

Legislative Update: State & Federal (continued)

(continued from front page)

thousands of undocumented youth. USCCB supports the proposed legislation - S.729

and H.R. 1751. Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, Utah and Chair of the USCCB's Committee on Migration sent letters in support of the legislation to

the bills' primary sponsors, including Sen. Dick Durbin.

Additional information on this legislation can be

found at:

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/dream.shtml>.

Immigration in the News

Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform – Illinois Statewide Network

Diocese of Belleville
Archdiocese of Chicago
Diocese of Joliet
Diocese of Peoria
Diocese of Rockford
Diocese of Springfield-in-
Illinois

For further information on the
CCIR – Illinois Statewide
Network, please contact:

Marilou Gervacio
Associate Director,
Catholic Conference of Illinois

Phone: (312) 368-1066
Fax: (312) 368-1090
E-mail: MarilouCCI@aol.com

*Submitted by Elena Segura,
Marcia Brown Medina*

CARDINAL GEORGE TO OBAMA: GRANT HAITIANS STATUS

<http://www.americancatholic.org/News/newsreport.aspx?id=875>

“With a new administration, the leader of the U.S. Catholic bishops is once again urging the President to grant Haitians residing in the U.S. temporary protected status from deportation back to poverty-stricken Haiti.”

DHS SIGNALS POLICY CHANGES AHEAD FOR IMMIGRATION RAIDS

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/29/AR2009032901109.html>

This article cites Cardinal Francis George's call on the government "to end immigration raids and the separation of families." “

“DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano has delayed a series of proposed immigration raids and other enforcement actions at U.S. workplaces in recent weeks. A senior department official

said the delays signal a pending change in whom agents at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement choose to prosecute.”

CARDINAL GEORGE IS RIGHT ABOUT IMMIGRATION

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/steinberg/1490508.CST-NWS-stein23.article>

“The Church deserves credit for being so completely right about an important social issue, taking a position that is more humane and progressive than the views held by many Americans, who forget that Jesus was an illegal immigrant, too.”

OBAMA TAKES POSITIVE STEPS TOWARD REFORM

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/brooklyn/2009/03/21/2009-03-21_obama_takes_positive_steps_toward_reform.html

“President Obama and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus breathed new life into it [immigration reform] during a meeting March 18th in Washington. Obama reaffirmed his campaign promise to address the immigration issue in the first

year of his term.”

OBAMA FLINCHES ON IMMIGRATION

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/opinion/24tue3.html?emc=eta1>

“The suffering that illegal immigrants endure is a civil-rights crisis that cannot be left to fester while we wait for the big immigration bill that may or may not arrive under this president.”

PEW HISPANIC CENTER RELEASES STATISTICS ON MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/47.pdf>

The Pew Hispanic Center recently released a statistical study on Mexican immigrants in the U.S., finding that 12.7 million Mexicans lived in the U.S. in 2008, accounting for 32% of all the U.S. immigrants.

The study also found that immigrants from Mexico generally are younger than other immigrants and less likely to be U.S. citizens.

The full report, “Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008,” can be found via the website link above.

About CCIR – IL Statewide Network

The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform (CCIR) – Illinois Statewide Network is composed of individuals from the six Roman Catholic dioceses in Illinois. The members include representatives who were appointed by their Diocesan

Bishop along with other interested people who work with and serve immigrants in communities throughout Illinois.

The Statewide Network is coordinated through the Catholic Conference of Illinois to discuss how to

better serve immigrants in Illinois through our parishes and Catholic organizations as well as to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform, in conjunction with the USCCB's National Justice for Immigrants Campaign (www.justiceforimmigrants.org).