



## Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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November 10, 2022

Dear Representative/Senator:

While my brother bishops and I continue to pray for and support a bipartisan, just, and comprehensive reform of our immigration system, I write today on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration to urge you and your colleagues to address the following pressing migration-related matters before the end of the 117th Congress:

### **Afghan Adjustment Act**

On August 10, 2022, I [wrote to Congress](#) to express our support for the “Afghan Adjustment Act”, bipartisan legislation introduced in the House (H.R. 8685) and Senate (S. 4787). Many of those who would benefit from this legislation served alongside U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan or are the family members of those individuals. We commend the United States for providing refuge to these men, women, and children, many of whom face the threat of persecution and even death in their native Afghanistan. Unfortunately, as humanitarian parolees, their ability to remain in the United States permanently is severely limited under current law, even after an unprecedented effort to secure their relocation. Without this legislation, tens of thousands of Afghans could become unlawfully present in the United States and lose work authorization once their parole expires in just a few short months. Enacting the Afghan Adjustment Act would solve this problem, while also fulfilling our nation’s promise to these families, demonstrating the United States’ commitment to its allies, and reaffirming the importance of humanitarian protection. Only by passing the Afghan Adjustment Act during this Congress can we avoid causing unnecessary hardship for this population and the American communities they now call home.

### **Permanent Relief for Dreamers**

We have communicated with you throughout the 117th Congress about the urgent need for Congress to provide permanent protection that includes a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers. This has included: a February 17, 2021, [letter to the House and Senate](#) expressing our support for the American Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) and the Dream Act (S. 264); a March 15, 2021, [letter to the House](#) asking it to pass H.R. 6; and [testimony](#) I submitted to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary in June of 2021 supporting that measure. Most recently, I [implored](#) you to act after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit issued its decision in *Texas v. United States*, affirming a lower court’s ruling that deemed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to be unlawful. With the state of DACA, the overwhelming bipartisan support for this population, and their laudable, daily contributions to our society, the need for enactment of legislation granting legal status and a pathway to citizenship to Dreamers has never been more apparent. Only Congress can ensure the full legal integration of Dreamers in accordance with their God-given dignity. Please address this need before the end of this Congress.

## **Farm Workforce Modernization Act**

Now is also the time for Congress to enact bipartisan legislation that reforms the agricultural guest worker program and provides legal status to agricultural workers in the United States who toil daily in fields and in processing plants, supplying American communities with a safe, affordable, and stable supply of food. Following passage of the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (H.R. 1603) in March of 2021, with support from Republicans and Democrats alike, I joined Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the USCCB, in [urging](#) swift Senate action. Today, I am again calling on all of Congress to make passage of this legislation before the end of the 117th Congress a priority.

## **Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act**

On September 26, 2022, I joined with leaders of several other Catholic organizations in a [letter to the Senate](#) asking it to take up and pass the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act, introduced in the House as H.R. 6552 and passed with broad bipartisan support this past July. As we wrote at the time, H.R. 6552 is an important step forward. It includes provisions that would help prevent re-exploitation of trafficking survivors, facilitate their integration or reintegration into society, prevent and detect trafficking of school-age children, especially in a “linguistically accessible, culturally responsive, age-appropriate, and trauma-informed fashion”, expand efforts to prevent human trafficking abroad, and more. My brother bishops and I are grateful for Congress’ longstanding commitment to combatting human trafficking, both in the United States and elsewhere. Please further that commitment by sending H.R. 6552 to the President’s desk before the end of this Congress.

## **Robust Funding for Agencies and Programs Serving Immigrant and Vulnerable Populations**

In your ongoing efforts to finalize appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, I encourage you to keep in mind a broad range of migration-related appropriations priorities that I communicated to you in my April 21, 2022, [letter on Fiscal Year 2023 funding priorities](#) with respect to programs that are crucial for immigrants, refugees, asylees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied migrant children, survivors of torture, and victims of human trafficking.

## **Permanent Extension of the Non-Minister Special Immigrant Portion of the Religious Worker Visa Program**

Finally, I take this opportunity to reiterate the need for Congress to enact a permanent extension of the non-minister special immigrant portion of the Religious Worker Visa Program (RWVP) as part of appropriations for FY 2023. Under this small but important program, a maximum of 5,000 visas each year are available for religious workers employed by a broad range of religious denominations. Religious communities throughout the United States that participate in the program have found these visas vital to carrying out their work, including their efforts to serve the most vulnerable in our society. Since being enacted in 1990, this program has been subjected to a sunset provision, creating uncertainty for communities that depend on these visas and the federal agencies that administer them. However, the program has consistently enjoyed broad, bipartisan support in Congress and has been reauthorized more than a dozen times. Please alleviate this uncertainty—and unnecessary work for future Congresses—by enacting a permanent extension of this vital program prior to the end of the 117th Congress.

It is the mission of the Catholic Church to bring to the present times the teachings of Jesus Christ, which remind us daily of how all persons are created in God’s image. The work of the USCCB on behalf of immigrants, refugees, unaccompanied children, trafficking victims, and others on the move answers Christ’s call to welcome the stranger and furthers the Church’s commitment to protecting the life and dignity of every human person, from the moment of conception to natural death. The priorities I’ve

conveyed here are consistent with those aims. Thank you for taking them into consideration during the final weeks of the 117th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario E. Dorsonville". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville  
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

CC: All U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives