



U.S. Federation SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

Leadership Council

Corporate Voice Statement

June 2012



STATEMENT **IMMIGRATION**

We, the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership Council, compelled by the Gospel and by our heritage to be responsive to the “dear neighbor” without distinction, call on the President and the U.S. Congress to enact immigration policy that is both just and comprehensive. We believe that this policy must include:

- A plan for addressing applicant backlogs for permanent residence, with family unity as a priority.
- An effective program for temporary workers that insures labor protections and equitable wages.
- A realistic path to earned legalization.
- Restoration of due process protections and reformed detention policies for those detained in the immigration system.
- Children and adults with no criminal background not be detained in centers or deported.
- Effective and humane border security that recognizes the human rights of all people.
- A process whereby students who are children of undocumented families can earn a college degree, become gainfully employed, and can enter into a path to citizenship.

IMPACT ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Immigration impacts women and children deeply since they comprise more than half of undocumented people in the United States. Because of this and the hardship they endure, immigration reform needs a strong family reunification component so that mothers and children will not be separated.



TALKING POINTS

- 1. Reduce applicant backlogs for permanent residence with family unity as a priority.**
 - Immigrant families contribute to the economy of our nation and help form new generations of Americans.
 - A U.S. family-based immigration system, to help keep families together, is in urgent need of reform. Some families wait more than 8-10 years for spouses to reunite with each other and for parents to reunite with minor children.
- 2. Effective Worker Program**
 - Job portability: Workers should be able to move between jobs without losing their immigrant status.
 - Family unity: allow immediate family members a work authorization visa to join the worker in the United States.
 - Enforcement mechanism and resources are needed to assure worker rights.
 - Visas should be renewable as long as the workers meet the requirements.
- 3. Realistic path to citizenship**
 - Earned legalization should be workable, achievable and fair.
- 4. Dream ACT**
 - The DREAM Act is about fairness to high school graduates who were brought to this country unlawfully through no fault of their own, since they came with their parents. Despite achieving their high school diploma, they have no options. The DREAM Act offers them a future through education or military service to their country.
 - This legislation is an investment in America's youth, and in the future workforce of America. To be competitive in a global economy, we need to invest in a skilled and educated workforce.

ACTION STEPS

- Advocate for comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level.
- Become knowledgeable of comprehensive immigration reform at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.
- To take action on current concerns, go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org.
- Advocate for family unity and oppose inhumane immigration enforcement policies that separate families.
- Learn about your state immigration policies and take action as needed; go to <http://immigrationpolicy.org/>, then click on Immigration by Stat.
- Host a gathering and invite some to share their immigrant story; invite others to do the same. We are either immigrants or descendants of immigrant ancestors.
- Advocate for the DREAM Act—The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act: This legislation has been introduced in Congress previously, but has not yet passed. It is an important piece of legislation that offers a path to legal status for those who were brought to the United States as children and know the U.S. as their only home. For more information, go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org and www.networklobby.org/DREAM.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

www.networklobby.org or www.justiceforimmigrants.org.