

TALKING POINTS ON FAMILY UNITY

- The status quo of the current system causes much suffering among immigrant families and must end. Creating a humane immigration system is not simply a political issue in Washington. It is about protecting family values and affirming the dignity of all people – mothers, fathers, and their children of all ages – regardless of legal status. It is urgent that lawmakers fix a broken immigration system that separates children from their parents, and betrays our national and Catholic principles upholding the family as an important cornerstone of our society. By standing up for immigrants, we are putting our faith into action and advocating for policies that serve the common good.
- Throughout our nation's history, immigrants have settled in the U.S., worked hard, sacrificed for the benefit of their children and families, and contributed to the cultural fabric of our society. Immigrants come here today seeking to do the same things, but their chance to live the American dream is often denied or, worse, shattered when parents, children or other loving members of their family are separated from one another as a result of the cruel deportation policies that exist. Indeed, it is common – and legal under current law – for parents to be forcibly removed from the presence of their children. In many cases U.S. citizen children are separated from their immigrant parents and the time apart can last up to ten years.
- When Catholics and all Americans call for supporting families as a pillar of comprehensive immigration reform, we are upholding family unity and making a stand for family values. We are also standing in compassionate solidarity with the more than 200,000 immigrants with U.S. citizen children who were deported between 2010 and 2012. Moreover, we are uniting with many Catholics in their work, ministries, and as humanitarians that have offered consolation to the traumatized teenagers and children whose parents have been detained or deported.
- Passage of compassionate immigration reform legislation that respects human dignity will allow millions of immigrants to emerge from the shadows as well as protect immigrant families from separation. Immigration reform would also reduce the immigration application backlogs so that families may be united more quickly, help millions of young people who know of United States as the only country they have ever called home, protect refugees and unaccompanied immigrant children, and end the heartache experienced by many when a family member is deported.
- Current legislative proposals, while not perfect, go a long way toward correcting injustices in the immigration system. The Senate legislation, S. 744, would protect families from separation by giving the undocumented legal status and a chance at citizenship. We ask and pray that all Members of Congress will stand up for immigrant families, put human dignity before politics, and underscore family unity as a key principle of immigration reform, because strong families are the foundation of robust communities in American life.

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