



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

NETWORK Lobby on Access to Citizenship

NETWORK believes that, as people of faith and a nation of immigrants, we are called to welcome the stranger and love our neighbor. Immigrants and refugees are a vibrant part of the fabric of our society and positively contribute to our churches and our communities.

The Reality of Access to Citizenship

Immigration reform is long overdue. Our current immigration system is outdated, backlogged, and needs to be modernized. Because of this, the lives of millions of families hang in the balance. We believe every family deserves stability and security and that children should not have to live with the fear that their parents will be taken from them at any moment. The longer we wait to pass immigration reform, the more vulnerable these families are.

Our Values:

- Catholic Social Justice teaches us that every person belongs to a single and interconnected human family.
- We believe that everyone has a right to migrate to escape persecution, or to seek better opportunities for ourselves and our families.
- Migrants are our neighbors; we need to offer pathways to citizenship and work to keep families together and safe.
- Scripture tells us that we too were once strangers in a strange land and so, we must love migrants and refugees as ourselves.

Federal Policies Must Mend Gaps, Not Widen Them

We must mend the gaps in our immigration system to ensure that people who have established their lives in America have a pathway to citizenship. We must also create new opportunity for people to come to the U.S. for work, family reunification, or to flee violence in their home country. Administrative efforts such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provides temporary status for a small number of undocumented individuals, and while it is a step in the right direction, we desperately need a permanent legislative solution that creates a path for all undocumented people who contribute to our society. Lawmakers should remember Pope Francis's words when he addressed Congress, "We, the people of this continent are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners." We call on Congress to do all they can to protect refugees and immigrants.

Citizenship Fast Facts

50-75%: Between 50 and 75% of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. file and pay income taxes each year.¹

\$100 Billion: Although undocumented immigrants have paid as much as \$100 billion into Social Security over the past decade, they're not eligible to receive benefits.¹

741,000: Over 741,000 young undocumented individuals received DACA, providing temporary relief from deportation and employment opportunities.²



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“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

– Matthew 25:35

Time for Moral Leadership on Immigration

While we await legislative reform that will fix our broken immigration system once and for all, we recognize that now is a crucial time for Congress to ensure human dignity is reflected in all immigration policy. Legislation and policies must address the current reality of family separation, harsh deportation practices, and militarized borders to pose solutions rather than exacerbate the problem. We also have a special responsibility to demonstrate concern for the poorest and most vulnerable people in our world.

What Congress Can Do Now

Protect undocumented young people: Almost 800,000 undocumented youth and young adults who are already part of the fabric of our society have had the opportunity to work, pursue their dreams, and benefit their communities without fear of deportation since 2012. We need legislative solutions that will protect these and other undocumented members of our communities. We urge Congress to immediately pass the BRIDGE Act, bipartisan legislation that will protect Dreamers.

Prioritize family unity: Our faith teaches us that families are the foundation of strong communities. We urge Congress to affirm the importance of family-based immigration visas and ensure that children do not have to live in fear of a parent being taken from them at any moment.

Uphold religious freedom: As people of faith, we understand that protecting individuals regardless of their religion is not only an American value but is essential to a faithful call for justice. We urge Congress to reject all proposals to ban, register, or otherwise discriminate against individuals based on religion.

Pursue the civil and human rights of border communities: The borderlands are a dynamic home to bi-national and indigenous communities. Current enforcement practices are devastating these communities, contributing to migrant deaths in remote regions and violating the rights of U.S. citizens and migrants alike. We urge Congress to reject further militarization of the border, oppose border enforcement policies that violate human and civil rights and affirm policies that include strong oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Safeguard refugee resettlement and asylum: The U.S. refugee resettlement program is a life-saving public-private partnership with historical bipartisan support. All people fleeing to safety deserve access to protection and to be treated with dignity. We urge Congress to support refugee resettlement and access to asylum – programs governed by core humanitarian principles and grounded in values of hospitality, compassion, and welcome.

Defend community trust policies: Community safety is best protected when all community members, regardless of immigration status, feel safe approaching law enforcement officials and do not fear that they, their family, or other community members will be detained or deported as a result of such interaction. We urge Congress to oppose policies that penalize communities and local police departments for prioritizing community safety over participation in federal immigration enforcement activities.

For more information visit: www.NETWORKLobby.org

1. Santana, Maria. *5 Immigration Myths Debunked*. November 20, 2014. CNN. <http://money.cnn.com/2014/11/20/news/economy/immigration-myths/>

2. Krogstad, Jens M. *Unauthorized Immigrants Covered By DACA Face Uncertain Future*. January 5, 2017. Pew Research. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/05/unauthorized-immigrants-covered-by-daca-face-uncertain-future/>