

JFI Campaign Update

Cardinal McCarrick testifies in the U.S. Senate on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration on October 8th on the Church's position on immigration reform. Cardinal McCarrick called for legislation which would 1) bring immigrants out of the shadows through a legalization program; 2) preserve family unity through reforms to the family-based immigration system; 3) create legal avenues for migration for migrant workers; 4) restore due process protections for immigrants; and 5) address the root causes of migration. In his testimony, Cardinal McCarrick described the human suffering that the Church witnesses each day in immigrant communities, as families are torn apart and immigrants are detained for long periods. Cardinal McCarrick also asked the subcommittee to ensure that the immigration debate is civil and is not used for political or partisan purposes.

A copy of the Cardinal's testimony can be found on the Justice for Immigrant's website at justiceforimmigrants.org

Health Care Bill Advances in the Senate, Some Immigrants left in the Waiting Room

On October 13, the Senate Finance Committee passed conceptual health-care legislation (not statutory language) which would expand health-care access to Americans through the creation of a health-care "exchange," a system created to pool insurance providers and keep rates affordable and competitive. A "public option," known as a government-run plan, was not added to the bill.

The committee did provide subsidies in the form of tax credits to enable legal immigrants earning up to 400 percent of the poverty line to purchase health insurance. However, in calculating the subsidy the legislation would exclude family members without documentation, thus disqualifying many immigrant families from coverage. For example, a family of four earning \$88,000 a year with two undocumented parents would be treated as a family of two earning the same amount.

In addition, the Senate Finance legislation explicitly prohibits the undocumented from purchasing health care coverage in the exchange, even if they use their own money. This would force them to rely on unscrupulous insurers outside the exchange or use emergency rooms for their primary care, driving the cost of health care up for all taxpayers.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference has raised concerns about these provisions and is working to change them.

Pennsylvania Regional Convening

JFI held a regional convening of approximately 130 Catholic community leaders in Malvern,

PA, just outside of Philadelphia, from October 7-9. Representatives from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Maryland, Virginia, Connecticut and Tennessee were in attendance. His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia, celebrated Mass and delivered a homily on the Church position on welcoming newcomers. The Cardinal's talk can be found on the [Justice for Immigrants website](#).

Representative Luis Gutierrez introduces immigration reform principles

Representative Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) addressed a rally on the West Lawn of the Capitol on October 13 and outlined the following principles for immigration reform: 1) a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers; 2) professional and effective border enforcement; 3) smart and humane interior enforcement; 4) protecting workers, both US. and foreign-born; 4) an effective employer verification system which protects workers from exploitation from employers; 5) family unity as a cornerstone of our immigration system; 6) future flow of workers with worker protections; 6) the inclusion of AgJOBS and the DREAM Act; and 7) the promotion of immigrant integration.

Representative Gutierrez intends to introduce legislation based on these principles sometime in November. The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference will work with Representative Gutierrez to fashion legislation which best reflects the bishops' principles for immigration reform.

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