

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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May 21, 2014

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Congressman Steve Southerland  
1229 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

## **Re: Support for Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

Dear Congressman Southerland:

We and our brother bishops remain deeply concerned with the state of our nation's immigration system. We hold that persons should be able to migrate to support themselves and their families. At the same time, we acknowledge that sovereign nations have a right to control their borders. We encourage you and your colleagues in the 113th Congress to support just immigration reform that advances both of these goals by providing:

- A path to legalization for those currently present in the United States in undocumented status.
- Increased fair and transparent worker visa programs for low-wage immigrants.
- Adjustment to legal status for DREAMers, who have spent most of their young lives in the United States and whose decision to enter the country was made for them by their parents.
- Expanded family reunification visas.
- Reasonable, enhanced interior enforcement and border protection.

The United States' economy depends on the labor provided by migrants; yet these individuals are often treated inhumanely. Temporary worker programs have been fraught with worker abuse and families separated for years resulting from visa application backlogs.

We are a nation with a long, rich tradition of welcoming newcomers. We have an obligation to promote the common good. The United States needs an immigration system that provides avenues for persons to enter the nation legally in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner to obtain jobs and reunite with family members.

It is imperative that Congress work hard to produce legislation which creates an immigration system predicated on the rule of law and which upholds values all Americans cherish—hard work, opportunity, and compassion. The time to pass just and compassionate immigration reform is now.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of District 2 and to our nation.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski  
Archbishop of Miami  
FCCB President

Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of Venice  
Justice for Immigrants Moderator