

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



January 13, 2016

The Honorable Carlos Trujillo
Room 417, The Capitol
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

RE: Opposition to HB 9

Dear Chairman Trujillo:

We respect your efforts to address immigration problems in our state. However, we oppose HB 9.

Immigration is a Federal Issue – Not a State Issue; Bill Copies but Adds to Federal Law

The U.S. Constitution establishes that the federal government has primacy over immigration violations. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Arizona v. United States*, struck down provisions in Arizona's immigration enforcement law that criminalized immigration law violations. While it largely reiterates current federal law, the proposed amendment takes a federal violation for illegal reentry and creates a new state felony with a much stronger penalty.

Problematic Results for Future Comprehensive Immigration Reform Efforts

We are hopeful that federal reform can someday provide a pathway to legal status in the U.S. for those who are currently undocumented. Your legislation would almost certainly prevent future legal adjustment of the status of those convicted of this new felony (because of their felony records). This is a foreseeable negative consequence of the proposal.

Undocumented Contribute to Economy; Legislation Has Negative Economic Impacts

While we do not advocate for undocumented immigration into the U.S., undocumented persons contribute to our state's economy and tax base as consumers. This legislation would require further enforcement by local and state law enforcement and add burdens to our prison system by incarcerating those who otherwise contribute to our economic growth.

Better Legislative Path: Resolution in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

In place of a problematic bill, we urge the House to send a resolution to Florida's congressional delegation in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy".

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Honorable Larry Metz, Chair, and Members of the House Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President
Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of Venice & FCCB Justice & Peace Moderator
Ingrid M. Delgado, Associate for Social Concerns/Respect Life