

RESOLUTION

**to the 2006 Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus
Seattle, Wash.**

TITLE OF THE RESOLUTION:

Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Submitted by:

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Chair, Refugee Council USA**

Name __ C. Richard Parkins,

Diocese/Organization:

Episcopal Migration Ministries

Please give the Resolution below and the Explanation (instead of "Whereas" clauses) on the reverse side of this sheet.

RESOLVED, That the Episcopal Urban Caucus endorse and advocate on behalf of the resolution of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church which requests the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform legislation that observes the following principles:

- **provide for an orderly and legal process for workers to enter the United States to accept employment,**
- **provide for the ability of immediate family members to accompany or reunite with US worker relatives to avoid the protracted waiting period which now frustrates family unity for migrant workers,**
- **provide for a pathway to permanent residence and eventual citizenship,**
- **provide for protecting the rights of workers entering the US,**
- **provide for reasonable procedures for those now in the US without legal status to adjust to legal status.**

EXPLANATION

The US immigration system is seriously flawed. The Episcopal Church has noted that immigration reform which focuses exclusively on enforcement fails to acknowledge the economic pressures which drive workers to accept life threatening risks to enter the US to relieve their families of grinding poverty. The current system also overlooks the genuine need for migrant workers which, if not responded to through the orderly and legal process for persons to accept employment in the US, results in clandestine movement to the US where workers' rights can be ignored and gross exploitation occur. Also ignored in the current system and in some of the legislation before Congress is the need to eliminate the incredible backlog in family visa applications which results in separating families for protracted periods.

Finally, the presence of approximately 11 million undocumented workers residing and, for the most part, working in the US requires a solution which permits those working here and not otherwise inadmissible to remain legally. Criminalizing their presence and seeking to deport them are both inhumane and impractical.

The House of Representatives version of immigration reform (H.R. 4437- the Sensenbrenner/King bill) emphasizes expanded detention, deportation, and more rigorous border enforcement and neglects such issues as family unity, a legal means to admit needed workers to the US and a meaningful resolution of the presence of undocumented workers in the US.

The Senate's Judiciary Committee has before it the Kennedy/McCain bill (The Secure America Act) which essentially embodies the principles adopted by the Episcopal Church and other faith based groups as well as immigrant rights colleagues. This bipartisan legislation offers the possibility of immigration reform which is enforceable, realistic, and just. The House bill, which will influence the Senate's deliberations, is one of the most regressive pieces of immigration legislation to be introduced in the past 50 years. Its passage would severely compound the ills of the current system and do nothing to serve the national security objectives which is the presumed intent of the bill. To foster an expanded underground workforce where exploitation is rampant does not enhance national security and condemns thousands to desperate conditions, including creating more deaths and casualties

among those taking incredible chances to escape poverty.

2006 could be the year in which real comprehensive immigration reform could occur. . Without robust advocacy, it is also the year when an unjust and unworkable immigration system could be installed. Our advocacy is needed to avoid this possibility.

ACTION: Contact your senators requesting that they support the Kennedy/Mc Cain bill (Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2006) and reject that Sensenbrenner/King bill (HR 4437 - the Border and Immigration Enforcement Act) which rejects the principles of reform adopted by the Episcopal Church.