

NETWORK Statement on Comprehensive and Fair Immigration Reform

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” (MT 25.35)

In our call for comprehensive immigration reform, NETWORK is inspired by the Gospel mandate to welcome the newcomer.

NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, is honored to stand with other faith leaders in calling on the Senate to pass a responsible solution to our nation’s broken immigration system.

In contrast to the narrow and punitive measure, HR 4437, which was passed by the House of Representatives in December, true immigration reform should include these basic principles:

- ◆ Opportunity for workers—We as a nation need to recognize the contributions of undocumented persons currently residing in the United States. We have to reconcile our need for their labor with their human rights and to bring undocumented persons out of the shadows of society into permanent legal status. We also need to provide more legal opportunities for future immigration.
- ◆ Family reunification—Under the current system, it can take decades for families to be together again. Real family values honor the need of families to be close to each another.
- ◆ Effective and humane border policy—The past decades’ build-up of border walls and armed agents has only succeeded in making border crossing and the pursuit of the American dream more perilous. The state of the border is a symptom of the deeper problem of our broken immigration system, rather than the cause. Bringing immigration policy into line with our nation’s economic needs will relieve pressure on border patrol agents, as well as the humanitarian crisis of deaths in the desert. NETWORK advocates smart, compassionate borders that reflect sound policy.

We have learned throughout U.S. history that immigrants make vast and diverse contributions to our nation. As people of faith, we learn through Scripture that one encounters God in the experience of the immigrant. We cannot afford to ignore these learnings; it is time for comprehensive immigration reform.

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, educates, lobbies and organizes for just federal policies. Founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters, NETWORK is supported by more than 12,000 groups and individuals committed to working for social and economic justice.