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Catholic bishops call for action on immigration reform

In a letter to the state's delegation, prelates urge U.S. representatives to support a comprehensive solution

The Catholic bishops of Washington on Tuesday urged members of the state's delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives to support comprehensive immigration reform. Legislation passed earlier this year by the U.S. Senate is now being considered in the House of Representatives.

In asking members of the state delegation to help bring an immigration reform measure to a vote, the bishops said they favored a measure that promoted a path to citizenship, promoted family unity and reduced the current legal immigration backlog. The bishops also said any reform measure must include adequate border security as well as protection for American workers and the due process rights of immigrants.

"As pastors of the Catholic Church in Washington State, we are deeply concerned about the human suffering caused by our deficient immigration system," the letter said. "We are writing to urge your support for comprehensive immigration reform legislation that respects the human dignity of migrants and reflects the unique soul and character of America."

In cooperation with a national effort by U.S. bishops to raise awareness among Catholic people and promote legislative action, Washington's four bishops released a joint [statement](#) on immigration last week for distribution in parishes across the state at Masses on the weekend of Sept. 7-8.

In that statement and their letter to Washington's congressional delegation, the bishops noted that "the U.S. immigration system is deficient for everyone: taxpayers, employers and immigrants alike."

Comprehensive immigration reform, they said, would restore the rule of law by creating an immigration system that facilitates legal entry and presence, unlike the current system which fails to protect national security, is counterproductive to economic development and does not meet the demands of justice.

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