

WHITE HOUSE PROPOSAL

Background. On Thursday, March 29, a proposal on immigration by the White House was made public. It does not meet the bishops' principles for comprehensive immigration reform. Among its elements are:

- It allows the 12 million undocumented to apply for a temporary work visa and permits them to apply for permanent residency, but does not supply sufficient green card numbers to ensure that any of the 12 million would receive permanent resident status within a reasonable period. It could take as long as 15-20 years for many to obtain a green card;
- It requires that participants pay \$3,500 every three years until they are eligible for a green card, as well as \$10,000 upon eligibility;
- It prohibits participants from petitioning for family members;
- It establishes an uncapped temporary worker program which does not permit workers to bring their immediate family members and does not include minimum wage levels or labor protections;
- It establishes triggers prior to issuance of visas, including construction of a 370 mile wall along the southern border;
- It eliminates the categories which permit U.S. citizens to petition for sons and daughters, parents, and brothers and sisters and replaces them with employment immigrant visas.

Talking Points. It is important that the Catholic network communicate opposition to the White House plan as unacceptable.

- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Justice for Immigrants' Campaign is strongly opposed to the White House proposal on immigration reform. While it is important that the president is engaged on the issue, the proposal would lead to a permanent underclass of individuals and would separate families.
- For the 12 million undocumented, it would take an undue amount of time, as much as 20 years with the current number of available green cards, to obtain permanent residency. It would also be prohibitive, in that immigrants would have to produce thousands of dollars to remain legal and to eventually obtain permanent residency.
- It would separate families by eliminating family-preference categories which permit U.S. citizens to petition for adult sons and daughters and brothers and sisters to join them. It would not prevent temporary workers, under a proposed temporary worker program, to bring immediate family members with them.
- It would also require that enforcement goals are achieved, such as the construction of a 370 mile southern border fence, prior to the implementation of legalization programs.
- We ask you to support a comprehensive bill which would allow the undocumented a path to citizenship, preserve family unity, and create legal avenues for migration.
- The STRIVE Act (H.R. 1645) would provide a good starting point and the appropriate framework for a comprehensive immigration reform bill.