

MSJC Steering Committee Statement on Immigration Reform Sept. 2010

The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC) is a network of professed Marianist men and women and lay Marianists who have joined together to do education and action on social justice issues. We, the Steering Committee of MSJC, are deeply concerned about the lack of compassion for immigrants in the current debate about US immigration policy. We acknowledge the obligation of our government to protect the citizenry and to maintain control over our borders. However, we as a nation must resist short-sighted solutions that do not provide real security. We must also remember that immigrants coming to our country are usually poor people who are simply seeking jobs to support their families.

Embracing the spirit of Mary's Magnificat in the gospel of Luke, when she proclaims God's favor toward the poor, the powerless and the marginalized, we believe that a just immigration policy must include:

- The means for earned legalization with a pathway to citizenship for those who desire it;
- Support for maintaining family unity and encouraging family reunification among immigrants;
- Provisions to combat exploitative labor practices;
- An effective border security policy that is both just and humane.

We call on Congress and the Obama administration also to address the root causes of immigration, especially trade and international economic policies which undermine the ability of farmers and poor people in developing countries to make a decent living and deprive them of their human rights. People in developing countries who cannot survive economically may find it necessary to migrate to places where jobs are available.

Only a comprehensive approach to immigration reform, rather than one that focuses solely on strengthening border security and putting in place harsh enforcement and punishment provisions, can accomplish the kind of immigration policy that is just and compassionate.