

**Testimony in Support of Cincinnati City Council Resolution Recognizing the
Immigrant Community of Cincinnati and Calling for Comprehensive
Immigration Reform**

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On behalf of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, I want to thank Cincinnati City Council for extending a special welcome to immigrants in our city today as well as for calling upon our U.S. Congress and the Administration to pass and enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation this year.

Governments have a duty to protect our borders and maintain a fair and orderly process for migration. Yet, today, our immigration system is completely disordered, as too few paths for legal migration actually exist for a country and an economy that thrives on the contributions of newcomers.

In our Cincinnati parishes, schools, and human service agencies, we worship, learn and live beside more recent immigrants to this land. Consequently, we are also wounded when we witness these immigrant families torn apart by a broken immigration system. Too many undocumented residents are hiding in the shadows in fear. They are often exploited by unscrupulous employers who take advantage of their status. And many avoid reporting being victims of crime to the proper authorities, because they don't want to be separated from their loved ones. In concert with the U.S. Catholic bishops, we believe only comprehensive immigration reform can bring back a sense of law and order and better safeguard the God-given human dignity of those seeking a better life.

Despite this dysfunctional system, we know that many Cincinnati police officers and city officials are striving to build bridges of trust in our immigrant communities. We appreciate that the police department has had open and positive communication with our charities and ministries. There is still more work to be done, as there are several outstanding cases involving immigrants who have been targets of severe violence. We look forward to working with the city and police to resolve these cases and better ensure the safety of all immigrant residents.

Your leadership in support of this resolution will help to foster greater respect for immigrants in our city, who are essential to its vibrant future. And hopefully it will also motivate our Congressional delegates to repair our immigration system. Thank you.