



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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June 2, 2009

Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Senate Hart Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, I write to offer our support for S. 1085, the Reuniting American Families Act. The legislation would make important and long overdue changes to the family-based immigration system, ensuring that families are reunited in an efficient and timely manner.

Family reunification has represented the cornerstone of the U.S. immigration system, and should remain its central tenet in the future. Throughout U.S. history, immigrant families have helped build our nation by starting businesses, strengthening local communities, and helping to integrate their members and others into American society. In our view, our country should enhance opportunities for families to remain together and should resist proposals which would erode the family-based immigration system.

Despite our nation's traditional emphasis on family immigration, too often our current system keeps families apart for years. S. 1085 would improve the family-based immigration system by removing the annual cap on the number of visas which allow immediate family members to reunite with legal permanent residents. It is extremely important that barriers that keep the nuclear family—husband, wife, and child—divided are removed as soon as possible. The legislation achieves this goal while preserving the ability of other close family members, including siblings of United States citizens, to reunite with their loved ones and without eroding the institution of marriage and family.

The USCCB strongly believes that the U.S. immigration system should be reformed. Positive changes in the family-based immigration categories, such as those included in S. 1085, should be a central feature of any comprehensive immigration reform effort.

We applaud your introduction of this legislation and will work to help get it enacted into law.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend John C. Wester
Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration