

**Statement during Media Availability to continue “Mission for Migrants” Urging
House of Representatives to Act on Immigration Reform
Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle
Chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Migration
Washington DC
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As chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, I call today upon the House of Representatives to act before August on immigration reform legislation. We can no longer stand idly by as our brothers and sisters are subject to smugglers, human traffickers, drug traffickers and the dangers of the desert.

Each day, families are being divided by deportations, with as many as 100,000 U.S.-citizen children separated from their parents each year. Is this how we invest in these young citizens—the future leaders of our nation? No doubt we are undermining their trust in America when their own U.S. government—whose purpose is to protect these children—takes their father or mother away. There is a large social cost to inaction, a price we pay in this country every day and will pay into the future.

Family unity also extends across the border. It is a human tragedy that an untold number of children in Mexico and countries south see their fathers and mothers leave for the United States each day.. Sadly, , we see a record number of these children traveling the dangerous journey north to find their families as protection from the rising violence in their home countries. We must look at the root causes of migration in this hemisphere—both violence and poverty—and pursue long-term strategies that allow families to remain home and live in safety and dignity.

We are here today in solidarity with those who have died and continue to risk their lives in support of their families. We hope that the President, Congress and the American public will heed our call for reform. Support for immigration reform—already at record highs among the American public—will only grow. We stand ready to work with members on both sides of the aisle in the House of Representatives to find a solution to our broken system this year.

Thank you.