



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER
Secretariat for Administration and Community Affairs

January 19, 2010

Representative Patrick Garrity, Chair
House State-Federal Relations &
Veterans Affairs
Legislative Office Building
Room 203
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HCR 22

Dear Representative Garrity:

As Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and on behalf of Bishop John McCormack, I want to register our opposition to HCR 22. HCR 22 would urge Congress to oppose any legislation “supporting amnesty or the granting of lawful status to any person that has entered or remains in the United States illegally.”

The Catholic Church has historically held a strong interest in immigration and how public policy affects immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. The Church’s interest in this area is informed by Scripture, Catholic social teaching, and also by the Church’s own experience as an immigrant church in this country.

The fundamental premise of the Church’s position in this area is human dignity. Current immigration laws and policies have often led to the undermining of the immigrants’ human dignity and have kept families apart. The existing system has resulted in a growing number of persons in this country in an unauthorized capacity, living in the shadows as they perform jobs that would otherwise go unfilled.

The Catholic Bishops do not condone unlawful entry into this country or the circumventing of our nation’s immigration laws. The Bishops have proposed an earned legalization for those in this country in an unauthorized status and who have built up equities and are otherwise admissible. “Amnesty,” as commonly understood, implies a pardon and a reward for those who do not obey immigration laws, creating inequities for those who wait for legal entry. The Bishops’ proposal is not an “amnesty.”

Nevertheless, HCR 22 would also call for the rejection of plans such as the Bishops’ proposal which would provide a means for those who have entered the country unlawfully to remain. The Bishops’ earned legalization proposal provides a window of opportunity for undocumented immigrants who are already living in our communities and contributing to our nation to come forward, pay a fine and application fee, go through rigorous criminal background checks and security screenings, demonstrate that they have been paying taxes and are learning English, and obtain a visa that could lead to permanent residency over time.

We think that the Bishops’ proposal is a practical approach which recognizes the dignity of all human beings. Accordingly, we urge you to recommend against the passage of HCR 22.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your service to the people of New Hampshire.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Diane Murphy Quinlan, Esq.

Chancellor