

**Purpose of the Visit:**

Ask Congress to **support humane, compassionate immigration policies and oppose anti-immigrant attacks.**

Our Faith Teaches We Must Welcome the Stranger

Pope Francis reminded Congress, “In recent centuries, millions of people came to this land to pursue their dream of building a future in freedom. We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners... We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.”

As members of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, we stand with the Pope, the U.S. Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Jesuit Provincials in asking for immigration policy that supports family unity, provides a pathway to citizenship, and promotes humane and just treatment of immigrants. We also advocate in solidarity with our neighbors in Central America and call on Congress to rethink policy that militarizes the border and address the violence and rights violations in Central America that compel migration.

Personal Testimony (if applicable) Personalize the issue by sharing your story or the story of someone you know who is directly affected by our nation’s broken immigration system.

Compassionate immigration policy should:

Protect vulnerable people by providing refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people with a fair and efficient system that respects human dignity.

- We support humane and cost-effective alternatives to detention, like community-based case management systems, which are critical to avoid re-traumatizing individuals fleeing violence by allowing immigrants and refugees to live in supportive and safe environments while service providers guide them through the immigration process.

Reduce future undocumented immigration by making it possible for people seeking work or family reunification to remain in or enter this country legally.

- Our faith teaches us that people have a right to migrate; this is not amnesty.
- People also have the right to remain in their homes and home country. The U.S. should examine the root causes of migration and address these factors with long-term solutions.
- For the approximately 11 million undocumented Americans currently living in the U.S., we must provide a realistic way for them to work toward citizenship while passing background checks, learning English, and paying taxes if they aren’t already. It is the only smart, practical, faithful way to respond to our broken immigration system.

- The U.S. must also address the shortage of family-based visas and unreasonable wait times for people living in other countries wishing to join their families in the U.S.

Create safe and humane communities by ensuring that the enforcement of immigration law is professional, accountable, and humane.

- We must allow local law enforcement officials to focus on criminal laws, leaving civil codes to immigration officials. We also need more robust and transparent oversight of agencies responsible for immigration enforcement: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- The United States must change its detention and deportation practices to preserve immigrants' dignity and safety. These changes should keep families together during the deportation process, inform individuals in their own language of their rights and how to complain about mistreatment, and allow Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to access CBP facilities.
- Screening of CBP agents has greatly improved. But reform proposals are needed to address the lack of sufficient screening of previously hired agents, as well as the improper training, oversight, and accountability of agents.

Improve the economy by allowing immigrants to fully contribute to society.

- Legalization and naturalization can bolster currently undocumented immigrants' wages, help bring their families out of poverty, and increase their tax payments. These improvements can help strengthen our economy and reduce our budget deficit.

ASK: Will the Congressperson publically support the following principles of compassionate immigration policy?

- Create an accessible pathway to citizenship for all 11 million people without documentation;
- Work to maintain family unity in all elements of the immigration system;
- Protect the most vulnerable, especially refugees and asylum seekers;
- Respect the rights of U.S. and immigrant workers;
- Ensure the human rights of immigrant families;
- Examine the root causes of migration and propose long-term solutions.

ASK: Will the Congressperson be vocal in opposition to policies that devalue immigrants and the contributions they make to our communities and economy?

- Speak out against the repeal of DACA and any repercussions against DACA recipients;
- Oppose policies proposing the elimination of funding for sanctuary cities and similar programs;
- End programs and protocols such as Operation Streamline, the detention bed mandate, and family detention; and, instead place resources and cost savings into community-based alternatives to detention;
- Support using tax revenues to further improve our immigration system and reject its use for increased border militarization.