

*As the House of Representatives begins debate on immigration reform, 93 Catholic university presidents were joined by academics in sending the following letter on July 18, 2013, to every Catholic member of the House of Representatives, including House Speaker John Boehner and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.*

Dear Representative:

As educators preparing the next generation of American leaders to serve the common good, we are deeply engaged in the current debate over immigration reform.

Catholic colleges and universities have a proud history of providing opportunities to immigrants who enrich our nation with creativity, hard work and public service. Together we represent universities that educate more than 290,000 students. Leaders on Catholic campuses advocated for the DREAM Act, and we stand with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in urging Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes a road to earned citizenship. Our broken immigration system, which tears parents from children, traps aspiring Americans in the shadows and undermines the best values of this nation, is morally indefensible.

We hope that as you face intense political pressure from powerful interest groups, you will draw wisdom and moral courage from our shared faith tradition. Catholic teaching values the human dignity and worth of all immigrants, regardless of legal status. We remind you that no human being made in the image of God is illegal. The Vatican's *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* warns against the exploitation of immigrant workers and says "immigrants are to be received as persons and helped, together with their families, to become a part of societal life." We are part of an immigrant church in an immigrant nation.

As Catholics engaged in public service, you have a serious responsibility to consider the moral dimensions of policy decisions. Our immigration system is so deeply flawed, and in such urgent need of repair, that inaction is unacceptable. As Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, said last month:

*"Each day in our parishes, social service programs, hospitals, and schools we witness the human consequences of a broken immigration system. Families are separated, migrant workers are exploited, and our fellow human beings die in the desert. Without positive change to our immigration laws, we cannot help our brothers and sisters. Simply put, the status quo is morally unacceptable. This suffering must end."*

You face a complex issue that defies easy solutions and narrow partisan agendas. The United States is a nation of laws. It is also a nation built by immigrants. Our faith tradition rejects false choices between freedom and responsibility, individual rights and collective obligations. We urge you to reject the false choices and divisive rhetoric that have too often characterized this debate. Protecting our borders and creating an earned path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants already in this country are not competing interests.

Please be assured of our prayers as you put prudence, human dignity and the common good at the center of your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Flynn  
President, Alvernia University  
Reading, Pennsylvania

Mary J. Meehan  
President, Alverno College  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Michael Galligan-Stierle  
President, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities  
Washington, District of Columbia

Rev. Michael J. Sheeran, S.J.  
President, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities  
Washington, District of Columbia

Francesco C. Cesareo  
President, Assumption College  
Worcester, Massachusetts

Sr. Linda Bevilacqua, O.P.  
President, Barry University  
Miami Shores, Florida

Rev. William P. Leahy, S.J.  
President, Boston College  
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Beverly A. Wharton  
President, Briar Cliff University  
Sioux City, Iowa

Deb Takes  
Interim President, Cabrini College  
Radnor, Pennsylvania

Sr. Nancy H. Blattner, O.P.A.  
President, Caldwell College  
Caldwell, New Jersey

John J. Hurley  
President, Canisius College  
Buffalo, New York

James P. Loftus  
President, Cardinal Stritch University  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Suzanne K. Mellon  
President, Carlow University  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

John H. Garvey  
President, The Catholic University of America  
Washington, District of Columbia

Sr. Joanne M. Burrows, S.C.  
President, Clarke University  
Dubuque, Iowa

Rev. Philip L. Boroughs, S.J.  
President, College of the Holy Cross  
Worcester, Massachusetts

Sr. Maryanne Stevens, R.S.M.  
President, College of St. Mary  
Omaha, Nebraska

Tony Aretz  
President, College of Mount St. Joseph  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Moya K. Dittmeier  
Executive Director, Conference for Mercy Higher Education  
Silver Spring, Maryland

Rev. Timothy R. Lannon, S.J.  
President, Creighton University  
Omaha, Nebraska

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M.  
President, DePaul University  
Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Bernard F. O'Connor, O.S.F.S.  
President, DeSales University  
Center Valley, Pennsylvania

Rev. Timothy A. Lenchak, S.V.D.  
President, Divine Word College  
Epworth, Iowa

Charles J. Dougherty  
President, Duquesne University  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rev. Jeff von Arx, S.J.  
President, Fairfield University  
Fairfield, Connecticut

Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J.  
President, Fordham University  
Bronx, New York

Keith Taylor  
President, Gannon University  
Erie, Pennsylvania

John J. DeGioia  
President, Georgetown University  
Washington, District of Columbia

Sr. Rosemary E. Jeffries, R.S.M.  
President, Georgian Court University  
Lakewood, New Jersey

Thayne M. McCulloh  
President, Gonzaga University  
Spokane, Washington

Kathleen Owens  
President, Gwynedd-Mercy College  
Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania

Br. John Rhodes Paige, C.S.C.  
President, Holy Cross College  
Notre Dame, Indiana

Sr. Francesca Onley, C.S.F.N.  
President, Holy Family University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Joseph E. Nyre  
President, Iona College  
New Rochelle, New York

Rev. Robert L. Niehoff, S.J.  
President, John Carroll University  
University Heights, Ohio

Sr. Candace Introcaso, C.D.P.  
President, LaRoche College  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Br. Michael J. McGinniss, F.S.C.  
President, La Salle University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fred Pestello  
President, Le Moyne College  
Syracuse, New York

James E. Collins  
President, Loras College  
Dubuque, Iowa

David J. Livingston  
President, Lourdes University  
Sylvania, Ohio

David W. Burcham  
President, Loyola Marymount University  
Los Angeles, California

Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.  
President, Loyola University Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Kevin Wildes, S.J.  
President, Loyola University New Orleans  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Sr. Mary Cecilia Jurasinski, O.S.B.M.  
President, Manor College  
Jenkintown, Pennsylvania

Lea Johnson  
President, Maria College  
Albany, New York

Denise A. Hammon  
President, Marian Court College  
Swampscott, Massachusetts

Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.  
President, Marquette University  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

David J. Fike  
President, Marygrove College  
Detroit, Michigan

Sr. Anne Munley, I.H.M.  
President, Marywood University  
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Barbara Q. Decker  
President, Mercy College of Health Sciences  
Des Moines, Iowa

John F. Hayward  
President, Mercy College of Ohio  
Toledo, Ohio

Thomas J. Gamble  
President, Mercyhurst University  
Erie, Pennsylvania

Dr. Arturo Chávez  
President, Mexican American Catholic College  
San Antonio, Texas

Thomas J. Botzman  
President, Misericordia University  
Dallas, Pennsylvania

Thomas P. Foley  
President, Mount Aloysius College  
Cresson, Pennsylvania

Ann Schiele  
President and Dean, Mount Carmel College of the Nursing  
Columbus, Ohio

Eileen Schwalbach  
President, Mount Mary University  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Norm Nielsen  
Interim President, Mount Mercy University  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Ann McElaney-Johnson  
President, Mount St. Mary's College  
Los Angeles, California

Thomas H. Powell  
President, Mount St. Mary's University  
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Rosalie M. Mirenda  
President, Neumann University  
Aston, Pennsylvania

Peter Cimbolic  
President, Ohio Dominican University  
Columbus, Ohio

Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.  
President, Regis University  
Denver, Colorado

Amb. Thomas Patrick Melady  
President Emeritus, Sacred Heart University  
U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See (Ret.)  
Fairfield, Connecticut

Sr. Andrea J. Lee, I.H.M.  
President, St. Catherine University  
St. Paul, Minnesota

George E. Martin  
President, St. Edward's University  
Austin, Texas

James S. Dlugos  
President, St. Joseph's College  
Standish, Maine

Rev. C. Kevin Gillespie, S.J.  
President, St. Joseph's University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Arthur F. Kirk  
President, St. Leo University  
Saint Leo, Florida

Thomas M. Mengler  
President, St. Mary's University  
San Antonio, Texas

Br. William Mann, F.S.C.  
President, St. Mary's University of Minnesota  
Winona, Minnesota

Thomas Kunkel  
President, St. Norbert College  
De Pere, Wisconsin

Rev. Msgr. Franklyn M. Casale  
President, St. Thomas University  
Miami Gardens, Florida

Br. Norman Hipps, O.S.B.  
President, St. Vincent College  
Latrobe, Pennsylvania

Christine M. Wiseman  
President, St. Xavier University  
Chicago, Illinois

Jane Gerety, R.S.M.  
President, Salve Regina University  
Newport, Rhode Island

A. Gabriel Esteban  
President, Seton Hall University  
South Orange, New Jersey

Patricia A. McGuire  
President, Trinity Washington University  
Washington, District of Columbia

Bassam M. Deeb  
President, Trocaire College  
Buffalo, New York

Thomas W. Keefe  
President, University of Dallas  
Irving, Texas

Daniel J. Curran  
President, University of Dayton  
Dayton, Ohio

Antoine M. Garibaldi  
President, University of Detroit Mercy  
Detroit, Michigan

Louis Agnese, Jr.  
President, University of the Incarnate Word  
San Antonio, Texas

Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.  
President, University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, Indiana

Pamela Trotman Reid  
President, University of St. Joseph  
West Hartford, Connecticut

Julie H. Sullivan  
President, University of St. Thomas  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Robert Ivany  
President, University of St. Thomas  
Houston, Texas

Mary E. Lyons  
President, University of San Diego  
San Diego, California

Rev. Stephen A. Privett, S.J.  
President, University of San Francisco  
San Francisco, California

Rev. Kevin P. Quinn, S.J.  
President, The University of Scranton  
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Sr. Diana Stano, O.S.U.  
President, Ursuline College  
Pepper Pike, Ohio

Rev. Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A.  
President, Villanova University  
Villanova, Pennsylvania

Richard Jusseaume  
President, Walsh University  
North Canton, Ohio

Rev. John J. Fleming, S.J.  
President, Wheeling Jesuit University  
Wheeling, West Virginia