

USCCB Chairman Applauds New Deportation Policy, Encourages Expeditious Implementation that Focuses on Immigrant Families, Youth

(Taken from the October 2011 J/P Alert from Conference of Major Superiors of Men)

WASHINGTON -- Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, applauded the recent announcement by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that prosecutorial discretion would be exercised on "low-priority" deportation cases.

"We urge your expeditious implementation of this proposal, as vulnerable immigrants who are 'low-priority' remain at imminent risk of deportation," Archbishop Gomez said in a September 29 letter to Secretary Janet Napolitano.

Archbishop Gomez laid out, from the perspective of the U.S. bishops, those categories of immigrants who should receive stays of deportation and qualify for work authorization, as outlined in the DHS announcement. These groups include members of families, as currently defined under federal immigration law; children and individuals who were brought to the United States at a young age and who would benefit from the DREAM Act; other vulnerable immigrants and those who had lived in the United States for years and built equities in their communities. He also asked for protection for "clergy and religious" who serve in faith communities across the nation.

Additionally, the letter requested that the new policy apply to all enforcement branches of DHS, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). It has been reported that since the announcement young persons and family members continue to be detained and placed in deportation proceedings.

"The decision embodies the kind of common-sense, compassionate immigration policies that can serve to simultaneously enforce federal immigration law while respecting the dignity and vulnerabilities of the migrants in our midst," Archbishop Gomez said. "We urge you to implement this policy expeditiously and in concert with [our] priority recommendations."

[[Full text of the letter](#) is available on the USCCB web site.]