

Obama takes administrative action, implements deferred action and work permits for DREAMers

By Eric Gible, Lobby Associate at NETWORK Lobby

[NOTE: Click here for important information regarding deferred action for DREAMers.](#)

In a compassionate and courageous move, White House officials announced that the Department of Homeland Security will no longer arrest or deport undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States before the age of 16 and are under 30 years old. The Interfaith Immigration Coalition celebrates with many immigrant youth and applauds the White House initiative to extend justice and mercy to those who have been repeatedly denied fairness. Those who qualify for deferred action include those who *(from the Department of Homeland Security Press Release):*

- 1) Came to the United States under the age of 16;
- 2) Have continuously resided in the United States for a least five years preceding the date of this memorandum and are present in the United States on the date of this memorandum;
- 3) Are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a general education development certificate, or are honorably discharged veterans of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States;
- 4) Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, multiple misdemeanor offenses, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety;
- 5) Are not above the age of 30.

If these younger immigrants have been leading law-abiding lives in the U.S. for more than five years and have graduated from high school, attained their GED or served in the military, they will presumably qualify for the deferred action



President Obama announced the new immigration policy on Friday, June 15 2012.

The initiative includes a means by which the qualified immigrants can obtain a work permit as well.

Deferred action is not a permanent solution and does not provide a path to citizenship. However, it removes the fear of deportation and destruction of family unity for many immigrants. It is estimated that approximately one million immigrants will benefit from this action, if fully implemented as reported.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition continues to fully support the original DREAM Act reintroduced by Senator Reid (D-NV) on Wednesday, May 11, 2011. Unfortunately, no action has been taken to move the bill through committee. We believe the principles of this bill, which allow undocumented youth of good moral character to obtain legal status, should be at the forefront of Congress' priorities.

Immigration Myths Busted

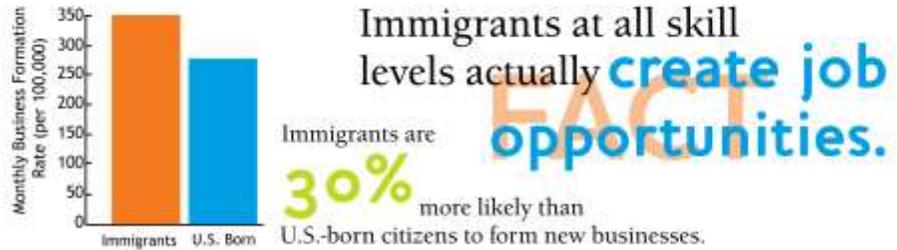


Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

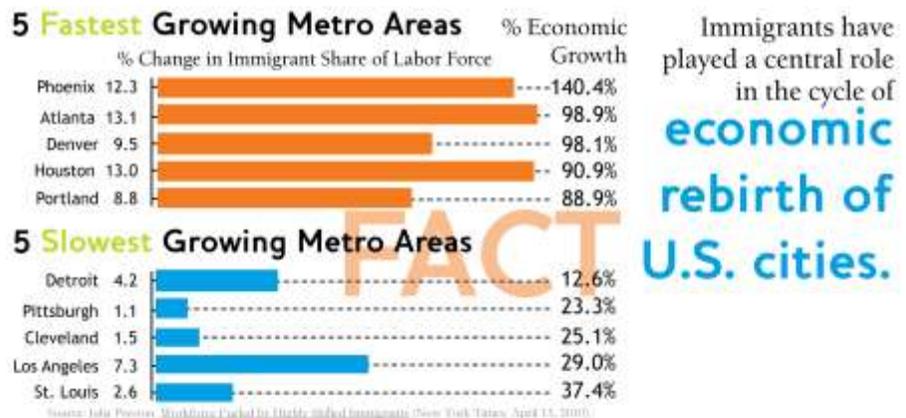
myth
Most immigrants are here illegally.



myth
Immigrants take jobs away from U.S. citizens.



myth
Immigrants drain resources without contributing economically or paying taxes.



Taxes paid by both legal and undocumented immigrants **exceed the costs of the services these migrants utilize.**

myth
Immigrants increase crime.



From 1994 to 2005 nationally the undocumented population **doubled** while the rate of **violent crime** declined by **34.2%**

More myths and facts about immigration
lirs.org/mythbuster

STAND for **WELCOME**
LIRS Advocacy with Migrants and Refugees

Policy Update

Legislative Update

In April, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill (S. 1925) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act by a vote of 68-31. The House removed some of the strong protections from the Senate bill and passed their own version (H.R. 4970) by a narrow vote of 222-205 on May 8. The bill must now move to a conference committee of both Senate and House members to determine which version passes. Go to www.churchworldservice.org/vawa2012 to take action and urge your representatives to support the Senate version and NOT the House version. The House bill is detrimental to the survival of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in the following ways:

- Eliminates confidentiality protections for battered immigrants,
- Imposes the highest burden of proof in our immigration system on self-petitioners,
- Takes authority away from the specially-trained USCIS VAWA unit in Vermont and giving it to local districts inexperienced in victim issues
- Mandates a permanent bar, FBI criminal investigation, and expedited removal of victims and all derivatives for alleged “material misrepresentations.”

On May 31, Rep. Rivera (R-FL) introduced the Studying Towards Adjusted Residency Status (STARS) Act, which would allow a severely limited number of undocumented youth to apply for nonimmigrant visas and eventually citizenship. The bill only qualifies for those under the age of 19 and only upon graduation would they be able to apply for a renewal of a five-year visa.

Administrative Update

The Obama administration has initiated some administrative policies that, if fully implemented, will promote family unity and the wellbeing of all immigrants.

Currently, certain undocumented immigrant relatives must return to their country of origin to apply for a family visa. As the law stands, once in their home country, some applicants for this visa will be banned from the U.S. for three to 10 years, which a waiver must be applied for. The proposed change allows applicants to remain in the United States while the lengthy determination for a provisional waiver is made. Applicants would still be required to return to their country to apply for the visa but having the provisional waiver would reduce time spent in the home country and excuse them from the three to 10 year bar to reentry. The proposed rule, with changes, was posted for comment until June 1.

The administration continues implement prosecutorial discretion across the country after the pilot programs in Baltimore and Denver were completed in January. The Department of Homeland Security will continue to review the appropriate application of prosecutorial discretion in other cities, including Seattle, Detroit, New Orleans and Orlando, and later in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York City.

While the administration has announced these reforms, they have not been consistently or broadly implemented, and deportations continue.

Executive Update

In April, the United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments regarding the constitutionality of the Arizona Immigration law. The Department of Justice had sued Arizona, arguing that Governor Jan Brewer violated the Constitution’s supremacy clause by implementing an immigration law that exceeds its constitutionally permitted state powers.

Several faith groups, submitted an amicus brief in the Supreme Court in opposition to the Arizona Immigration law. This brief highlighted the reality of state-sanctioned violations of humanitarian rights by the law in question. The U.S Supreme Court expects to publish its ruling before breaking on June 30.

There is an urgent need for people of faith to write letters to the editor following the decision. To add your name to the list of people of faith willing to speak with the media about this, and for some great talking points to help you craft a letter to the editor, please email jsmyers@churchworldservice.org.

State Updates

California: Assemblyman Manuel Perez proposed AB 1544, which creates a state work permit to legalize undocumented immigrants in the state.

Massachusetts: The state Senate approved the mandatory use of e-verify for employers as well as penalties to prevent undocumented immigrants from obtaining driver’s licenses or public housing in their \$32.4 billion budget.

Alabama: The state Legislature approved further draconian measures in HB 658. This includes publishing the names of undocumented immigrants on the official state website upon violation of any state law and demands the state compile a regular report on the progress of driving out undocumented immigrants to the Department of Homeland Security.

Catholic Sisters Provide Jail Ministry for Detained Immigrants

By Sister JoAnn Persch for the Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants

It has taken 3 years and a law passed by the Illinois legislature to be able to enter the McHenry County Jail weekly to provide pastoral care for the immigrant detainees who are housed in the jail.

Every Tuesday an interfaith team of pastoral workers provide support for immigrants who are detained in the jail. Sometimes there are close to 400 immigrants housed in the facility. This pastoral care program is a light for the men and women who come to us in their orange prison jump suits. Unlike their families, we are with the detainees in person. If the family can drive to the jail, 2 members are permitted a half hour visit by way of video.

We meet people from all over the world who are in detention. We listen to the heart wrenching stories from mothers and fathers who are so worried about family. We meet people who have been in this country since they are babies or toddlers and who know nothing about the county to which they are being sent.

The detainees tell us of serious medical needs that are not being met. Detainees cannot receive phone calls and the calls they make are collect and cost an excessive amount for the family. Most families cannot afford those calls.

Because most families cannot come to the jail or do not have money to send, the pastoral ministry program deposits \$10.00 in the account of any detainee with less than \$10.00 in their account. This is the money the women and men use to purchase hygiene items like soap and toothpaste as well as purchase snacks. The prison diet does not provide sufficient nutrition for them. One of the complaints we hear consistently is that the detainees are hungry.

Recently when one group of men walked in we were handed a note from a detainee who was unable to come because he had a court date. The note read in part, "You know I come every week, but I have court today. Could I please still get the \$10.00? I really need the money for hygiene supplies."

Of course, we added \$10.00 to his account. The women have figured out that if one woman buys shampoo, one buys toothpaste, and so on, they can share and their money goes farther. We find in general that the women and men do look out for each other. Unfortunately, we are not permitted to bring any of these items into the jail.

If you would like to make a donation to this ministry, please make checks payable to the Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants. Checks may be sent to the committee in care of the Sisters of Mercy, 10024 S. Central Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60655. By making a donation to this fund your lives will be enriching their lives as we celebrate the richness of all life.



Every Friday morning at 7:15am people of faith join together in a prayer vigil at Broadview Immigration Processing Center to support those who are in immigration detention

INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) is a partnership of faith-based organizations committed to enacting comprehensive immigration reform that reflects our mandate to welcome the stranger and treat all human beings with dignity and respect. The events, news, and action alerts in this email do not necessarily receive the support or reflect the views of every member organization of the Coalition