

197.3 In Support of Both the DREAM Act and Comprehensive Immigration Reform

RESOLVED, That the 197th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina urges the people and parishes of our Diocese to continue to respond to the current immigration crisis by:

1. Contacting our U.S. Representatives and Senators as well as state and local elected officials to encourage them to support not only the DREAM Act but also Comprehensive Immigration Reform, recognizing that they are different but related proposals.
2. Studying the issues with our current immigration system, engaging in dialogue with our neighbors to correct misconceptions about immigrants, and welcoming the immigrants in our communities.

Submitted by Penni Bradshaw and The Rev. Frederick Clarkson for the Chartered Committee on Hispanic

Ministry.

Comment: An estimated one million undocumented young people were brought to this country as children. They cannot legally work in the U.S., and they face significant issues in pursuing post-secondary education. The DREAM Act would provide a path to legal status for these young people.

In June of 2012, the Department of Homeland Security implemented a program known as “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” which provided that those approved would not be removed (deported) from the United States for at least two years, and during that two-year period would have temporary work authorization. Although laudable and a step in the right direction, Deferred Action is at best a temporary and incomplete “fix.” It is important to continue to encourage Congress pass the DREAM Act.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform should include not only some opportunity for undocumented persons to obtain a legal status, but also should include reforms to the system of legal immigration, which at present significantly limits the ability of employers to recruit highly-skilled foreign workers and has lengthy waits (up to 23 years) for family members abroad to join their U.S. citizen/permanent resident relatives here in the United States.

In 2008, the Diocese of North Carolina adopted Resolution 2008-3 committing our Diocese to study immigration reform, encourage local dialogue, and advocate for the protection of undocumented workers.

In 2006, the General Convention adopted a Resolution (2006-A017) stating that undocumented aliens should have reasonable opportunity to pursue permanent residency.

Biblical Touchstones

Do Not Oppress the Alien—Leviticus 19:33-34

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

All Christians Are United in Baptism without Distinction—Ephesians 2:14-3:2

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.”