

DATE: July 19, 2005

FROM: William Ryan

O -202-541-3200

H -202-686-1824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BISHOPS BACK MAJOR IMMIGRATION REFORM PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON—Bishop Gerald R. Barnes, Chairman of the Committee on Migration, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), expressed support for the McCain-Kennedy bill, “The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005.” “The legislation seeks to repair the current U.S. immigration system, a system which is broken and needs reform,” Bishop Barnes said.

“This legislative proposal best reflects principles for immigration reform set forth by the United States bishops,” the Bishop said in a statement released July 19. The legislation (S. 1033, HR 2330) was introduced in Congress last May.

“The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 represents a comprehensive and bipartisan approach to reforming our broken immigration system,” Bishop Barnes stated. “It creates legal avenues for migrant workers to enter the United States in a safe and orderly manner. It provides an opportunity for immigrants in the United States to work toward permanent residency. It also provides additional visas for families to be reunited through the family preference system.”

“For these reasons, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration supports the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005,” the Bishop said. “This legislative proposal best reflects principles for immigration reform set forth by the United States bishops.”

Bishop Barnes expressed a desire to work with the sponsors of the legislation and others to include additional important provisions to the measure. These would include additional labor protections in the essential worker program for both U.S. and foreign

.more.....

Page-Two

workers; mechanisms to ensure that migrants are treated humanely by enforcement personnel; and provisions which allow for the involvement of community organizations in the implementation of the new program.

“As Congress considers immigration reform, we urge all parties to engage the debate in a civil manner so that all sides can work together to fashion an immigration reform package which is humane and in the best interests of our nation,” Bishop Barnes said.

“We commend the sponsors of the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 and urge members of Congress to support this important initiative,” the Bishop said. “We urge President Bush to work with the sponsors and members of Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation during the 109th Congress.”

#####

05-163
SEC,RNS,CNS,Crux