



The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

JANUARY 15, 2006

About the Campaign

In the last edition of this newsletter, our attention was directed to the legislative proposals being considered by the U.S. House of Representatives. At that time, we encouraged you to take steps to activate parishioners and others in the community to weigh in on the restrictive and punitive measures being proposed by contacting members of Congress and expressing opposition to the proposed bill.

By a vote of 239 to 182, the House passed H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, just before they adjourned for the holidays. This bill represents one of the most punitive, mean-spirited legislative proposals passed on the question of immigration and, if enacted into law, would hark back to the days of the "Know Nothing" political party's anti-immigrant proposals in the mid-nineteenth century. What a cynical Christmas gift from our Congress.

Our records indicate that just over 1,000 email communications were sent to members of Congress about this bill via the *Justice for Immigrants* website. Though we are certain that other communications were sent as a result of the *Justice for Immigrants* campaign network's efforts, this still represents a disappointingly low number. Our adversaries are well organized and are generating considerably more communications to Congress. We have got to do better if we are to succeed in bringing about true reforms that are both humane and in the best of interests of immigrants and our nation.

We now turn our energies toward the Senate, as that chamber takes up immigration reform proposals, probably beginning in February. We must find creative and effective ways of getting the grassroots, especially parishioners, actively engaged in communicating to their senators. Senators need to know that enforcement-only and punitive measures are unac-

ceptable and ineffective in solving the ills of the current immigration system.

I heard recently about a strategy for mobilizing parishioners that I found both innovative and effective. The diocesan staff work with parish leadership to pull together a parish-wide meeting on the *Justice for Immigrants* Campaign. After a period of information sharing, designed to educate parishioners about the Church's position on immigration reform, parishioners are encouraged to get on-line to the JFI website and send a communication to their elected officials. Several computers with internet access are set up right at the parish hall where the meeting is taking place. As the parishioners go on-line to send their emails, they are also encouraged to use the feature of the site that allows them to notify several friends to do the same. This strikes me as an excellent way to combine education and action that produces concrete results.



During one of his visits to the U.S., the late Pontiff, John Paul II, asked this question: *Is present-day America becoming less sensitive, less caring toward the poor, the weak, the stranger, the needy? It must not! Today, as before, the United States is called to be a hospitable society, a welcoming culture. If America were to turn into itself, would this not be the beginning of the end of what constitutes the very essence of the "American experience?"*

My prayer is that with your help the Church will be an effective advocate for the immigrants and that true reforms, based on the principles enunciated by the bishops, will be enacted. Please join me in this prayer.

Written by Mark Franken, Executive Director Migration and Refugee Services United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Legislative Update

House of Representatives passed enforcement measure.

On December 16, 2005, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. The legislation is extremely punitive and will unduly harm immigrants and their families in this nation.

“The legislation is extremely punitive and will unduly harm immigrants and their families in this nation.”

H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005

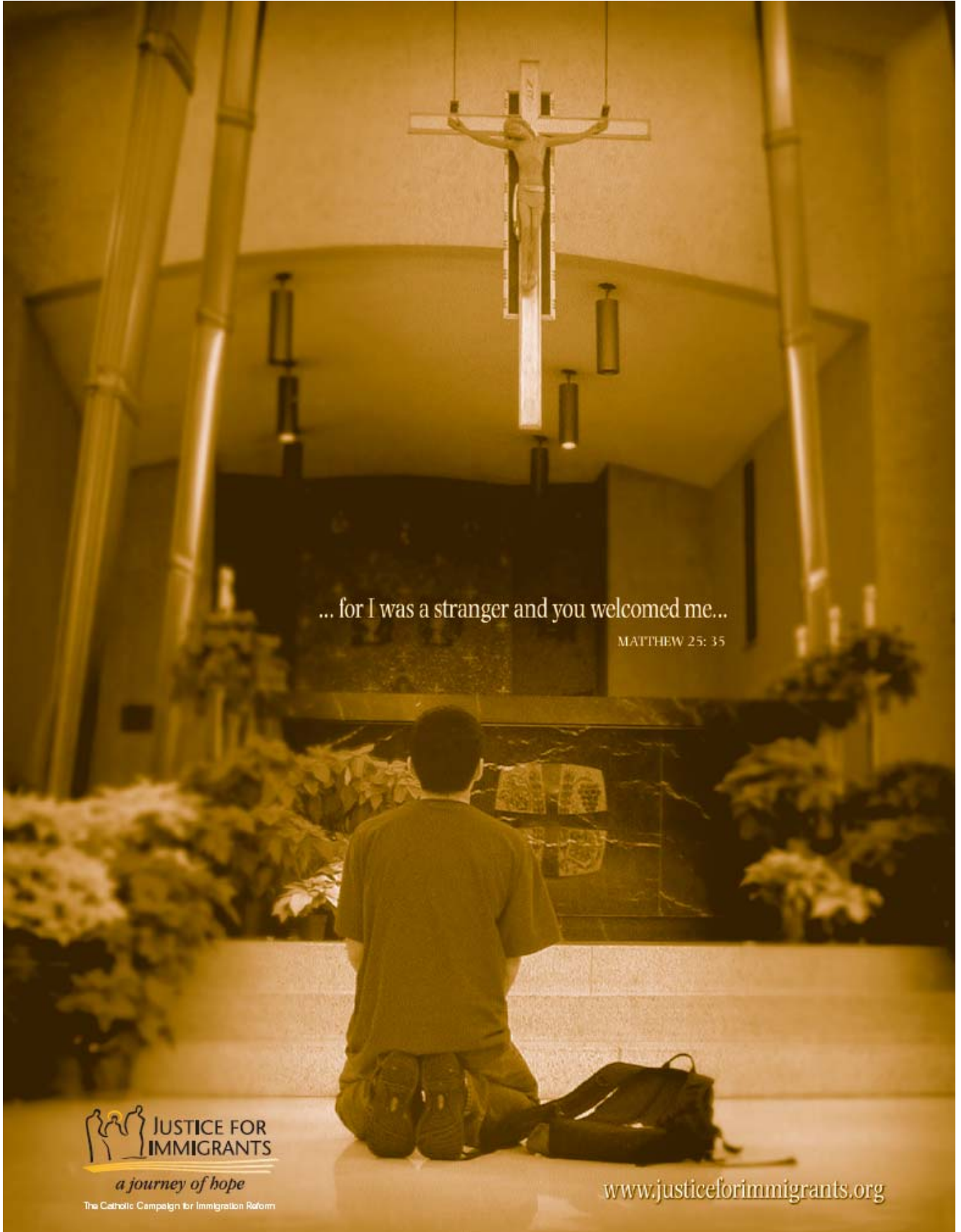
The following is a summary of the major provisions of H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Legislation passed the House of Representatives 239-182 on Friday, December 16, 2005.

- “Unlawful presence” would now be considered a crime and a felony, meaning that undocumented immigrants may have to serve jail time and would be barred from future legal status and from re-entry into the country.
- Immigrants, including asylum-seekers, victims of human trafficking, victims of domestic abuse, and children who are apprehended along an international border or at a port-of-entry would be detained until such time as they are removed from the nation or otherwise provided immigration relief.
- Anyone or any organization who “assists” an individual without documentation “to reside in or remain” in the United States knowingly or with “reckless disregard” as to the individual’s legal status would be liable for criminal penalties and five years in prison. This could include church personnel who provide shelter or other basic needs assistance to an undocumented individual. Property used in this act would be subject to seizure and forfeiture.
- The use of expedited removal, which would permit DHS enforcement personnel to remove a potential asylum-seeker without providing an opportunity to appear before an immigration judge or qualified adjudicator, would be mandated within 100 miles of the border and within 14 days of a person’s entry into the country.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would be required to erect up to 700 miles of fencing along the Southwest border at points with the highest number of immigrant deaths.
- State and local law enforcement are authorized to enforce federal immigration laws. State and local governments which refuse to participate would be subject to the loss of federal funding.
- Asylum seekers and refugees who are convicted of a minor offense, such as petty theft, would be barred from permanent legal residence and eventual citizenship.
- Document fraud would be considered an aggravated felony and would subject an asylum-seeker to deportation and bars to re-entry.
- Nationals from countries who do not accept the return of aliens who commit crimes in this country would not be admitted to the United States. This would include countries such as China, Vietnam, and Cuba.
- DHS would be given the authority to continue to detain individuals who have served their sentences based upon a determination that they are a “dangerous alien,” contrary to Supreme Court rulings barring indefinite detention.
- The diversity visa lottery program, which allows 50,000 immigrants each year from countries around the world to permanently reside in the United States, is eliminated.

These represent a few of the most egregious provisions of H.R. 4437. For more information visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org/action.html



“A Journey of Hope”



... for I was a stranger and you welcomed me...

MATTHEW 25: 35



a journey of hope

The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Parish Kit

The *Justice for Immigrants* recently released the hardcopy version of the campaign's parish kit designed to provide diocesan leaders, parishes, and individuals with re-

sources necessary to engage in the *Justice for Immigrants* campaign. The Parish Kit included hints for homilies, prayer petitions, talking points, and curriculum for study on the topic of immigration in light of Catholic social teachings as well as different tools to organize within your dioceses. Such tools will enable you to lead fo-

provide you with resources for working with the media.

Hardcopies are available to parishes working in the establishment and development of the local *Justice for Immigrants* campaigns by contacting the appointed diocesan Justice for Immigrants Local Point of Contact.

The parish kit is also available by visiting our web site www.justiceforimmigrants.org/parishes.html.

For a list of materials included in the Parish Kit, see the write up that follows.



Parish Lit Content:

Education:

- Catholic Bishops Call for Immigration Reform
- Liturgy and Prayer Suggestions
- Suggestions for Homilists
- Relevant Scriptural Passages
- Catholic Social Teachings on Migration
- Understanding Catholic Social Teachings as it Relates to Migration
- Quotes from Catholic Teaching on Migration
- Ideas for Schools, Religious Education, and Youth Programs

Action:

- Interfaith Statement in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- Tips for Legislative Advocacy
- Communicating with Elected Officials
- Media Outreach Tips
- Starting a Justice for Immigrants Speaker's Bureau
- Guide to Communicating With the Media

Additional Resources:

- Implementing JFI
- Poster
- Immigration Basics
- FAQ's
- Myths – Learn the Facts
- What Leaders are saying
- Response to Undocumented Immigration: The Arguments
- Economic and Migration: The Facts
- Enforcement of Immigration Laws: Important Principles
- Resource Bibliography
- Clip Art for Parish Bulletins and Other Publications
- Pledge Card
- Prayer Card
- Brochure



Local Justice for Immigrants Campaigns

The following is a list of (Arch)dioceses that have officially appointed a Local Point of Contact to coordinate the Justice for Immigrants Campaign with the national office as of date of publication of this newsletter:

Archdiocese of Atlanta
 Archdiocese of Chicago
 Archdiocese of Cincinnati
 Archdiocese of Denver
 Archdiocese of Dubuque
 Archdiocese of Houston-Galveston
 Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
 Archdiocese of Los Angeles
 Archdiocese of Miami
 Archdiocese of Milwaukee
 Archdiocese of Newark
 Archdiocese of Omaha
 Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Archdiocese of San Antonio
 Archdiocese of Santa Fe
 Archdiocese of Seattle
 Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis
 Archdiocese of Washington
 Diocese of Allentown
 Diocese of Austin
 Diocese of Beaumont
 Diocese of Brooklyn
 Diocese of Charlotte
 Diocese of Cleveland
 Diocese of Dodge City
 Diocese of El Paso
 Diocese of Fall River
 Diocese of Fresno
 Diocese of Grand Rapids
 Diocese of Green Bay
 Diocese of Harrisburg
 Diocese of Kalamazoo
 Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
 Diocese of Knoxville

Diocese of Lexington
 Diocese of Metuchen
 Diocese of Nashville
 Diocese of Oakland
 Diocese of Orlando
 Diocese of Owensboro
 Diocese of Paterson
 Diocese of Phoenix
 Diocese of Pueblo
 Diocese of Raleigh
 Diocese of Sacramento
 Diocese of San Bernardino
 Diocese of San Diego
 Diocese of San Jose
 Diocese of Springfield In Illinois
 Diocese of St. Augustine
 Diocese of Syracuse
 Diocese of Toledo
 Diocese of Trenton
 Diocese of Tucson
 Diocese of Youngstown

JFI In the Archdiocese of Washington, DC

The Time is Now! - By Nora Collins

With a diocese that is as incredibly diverse as our's, and strategically located in our nation's capitol, it is easy for the Archdiocese of Washington's Office for Justice and Service to become enthusiastic about (and appreciative for) the *Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform*. It is a blessing, just the added motivation we need to continue our commitment to the immigrant communities in our parishes, schools and institutions.

The Archdiocese of Washington is estimated to be comprised of fifty percent recent immigrants. Every ethnic group is present in our metropolitan region. Few Washingtonians know however, that Washington DC is now the number one port of entry and port of stay for Africans. (You need only to take a taxicab in DC to realize that ninety percent of our drivers are West Africans.) There should be no denying the great contribution that the various immigrant communities make to our region (and our churches!). For, we are truly blessed.

Yet, our Nation's capital is literally gripped in debate over immigration law (or, more accurately, anti-immigrant legislation). We all know, far too well, how damaging the Sensenbrenner's enforcement-only bill, if a companion bill were passed in the Senate in mid-March, would be to our communities. Cardinal McCarrick, speaking at a January 5th visit to our Catholic Charities Refugee Service Center in Columbia Heights DC, commented: "people who are trying to help immigrants will be finding themselves turned into criminals. That's going to include people at churches." He further commented that for churches to screen needy people for their immigration status is not an option "if you want to do what the Lord told you to do." And, this is only one of the many atrocities that the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, if passed by the Senate, would usher in.

To say that we, our Catholic parishes and Archdiocesan offices, feel 'urgently compelled' to do something more is to put it mildly. Providing social services is no longer enough (and even that now is being compromised)! The Archdiocese's began to ratchet up its organizing efforts by sponsoring an "Immigrant Listening Session" in March 2005. We joined forces with the Office of Hispanic Pastoral Affairs and the Office of Black Catholics and identified the leaders of our ethnic immigrant communities. Our Listening Session was a huge success, we learned a lot. One

immigrant woman commented that the evening "reminder her why she was Catholic." (Exactly! The church has always cared for those that are the most vulnerable.) In June, we hosted a second event, as promised at the first, and provided a Training Session on Legislative Advocacy for Immigrants. Again, it was a huge success. These are humble beginnings, but they are a beginning.

Realizing that there was still much that was needed by way of education (for many of our own are against us for lack of education), we decided to take advantage of National Migration Week in January. Our efforts were two-fold. First, we took this opportune week to send out initial information on the campaign to our parishes. Cardinal McCarrick asked the parishes of the Archdiocese to preach on the campaign, and the benefits of immigration, on Sunday, January 8th, the start of National Migration Week. The Cardinal sent homily hints, prayers of the faithful, and a suggested text for a bulletin insert to every Archdiocesan parish in DC and Maryland. Second, we honored National Migration Week in our very own Pastoral Center, which is home to the Archdiocese's administrative offices. Our leaders need to know they can be proud of their church!

Sometimes the biggest obstacles to success of diocesan programs are our own internal lack of collaborations. So the Schools Office, Religious Education Office, Missions Office, Office of Hispanic Pastoral Affairs, Office of Black Catholics, Communications Office, Parish Life and Worship Office, Liturgy Office (to name a few) were all invited to attend a continental breakfast where we educated everyone on the breadth and importance of the JFI campaign (free food and a good speaker, on company time, drew them out). The following day, we celebrated our noon mass in honor of National Migration Week, asking Archdiocesan staff to join us in prayer for the success of the JFI campaign. Again, the response was impressive.

As we outlined at our information breakfast, we are now well along our way to forming our *Archdiocesan Working-Group for the Justice For Immigrants Campaign*. We're stacking the working-group with the right people, building an internal coalition, made up of representatives from these various Archdiocesan offices as well as our parishes, social service institutions, and immigrant communities. We are looking forward to getting this Working-Group together in February to envision all the creative ways to make our Catholic voice (our strong, growing and experienced voice) heard on Capitol Hill. For, the time is Now! It is our church's experience with providing services to, and benefiting from the prayers and labor of, our immigrant communities that gives us the credibility to speak. So, we must!

"people who are trying to help immigrants will be finding themselves turned into criminals. That's going to include people at churches."

Participating Organizations Showcase



The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services carries out the commitment of the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States to serve and advocate for immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move.

This commitment is rooted in the Gospel mandate that every person is to be welcomed by the disciple as if he or she were Christ himself and in the right of every human being to pursue, without restraint, the call of holiness.

Migration and Refugee Services contributes to this commitment in an integrated fashion by:

- Assisting the bishops in the development and advocacy of policy positions at the national and international levels that address the needs and conditions of immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move.
- Working with the federal government and local churches in resettling refugees admitted to the United States into caring and supportive communities.
- Assisting local churches and specialized apostolates in responding to the pastoral needs of Catholics among these populations, including the facilitation of pastoral accompaniment of migrants as necessary and possible, thereby aiding in the development and nurturing of a welcoming and supportive Church in the United States.

Participating Organizations

A number of Catholic organizations with national networks comprise the national Campaign. These organizations have committed themselves to mobilizing a growing network of Catholic institutions, individuals, and other persons of good faith in support of a broad legalization program and comprehensive immigration reform.

Participating Organizations Include:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in particular:

- *Migration and Refugee Services,*
- *the Catholic Campaign for Human Development,* (see preceding write up)
- *Domestic Social Development,*
- *International Justice and Peace, and*
- *the Hispanic Affairs Secretariat;*
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC);
- Catholic Health Association (CHA);
- Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA);
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS);
- National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry (NCADDHM);
- National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW);
- National Catholic Rural Life Conference;
- National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA);
- U.S. Jesuit Conference;
- Leadership Conference of Women Religious;
- Conference of Major Superiors of Men;
- National Association of State Catholic Conference Directors (NASCCD);
- Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network;
- The Irish Apostolate USA; and
- The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors.





a journey of hope

The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

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In June 2004, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration and The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, INC. (CLINIC) Board of Directors resolved to make comprehensive immigration reform, with special emphasis on legalization, a major public policy priority within the Church. Many other national Catholic institutions have also made legalization a policy priority.

As part of the Church's response, a diverse group of Catholic organizations with national networks have decided to join the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope* campaign designed to unite and mobilize a growing network of Catholic institutions, individuals, and other persons of good faith in support of a broad legalization program and comprehensive immigration reform. Its goal will be to maximize the Church's influence on this issue, consistent with the immigration reform principles enunciated in the bishops' pastoral letter.

www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Public Education & Training Materials for JFI

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) is one of the founding members of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign and is a subsidiary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). CLINIC is an immigration legal support agency that provides training and technical assistance to a network of 156 Catholic immigration legal service programs in over 200 locations nationwide.

CLINIC created public education materials for the undocumented population about how the undocu-

mented can begin now to prepare for a future earned legalization program.

CLINIC also created training materials for the staff and volunteers of Catholic agencies on how to prepare for legalization. Thomas J. Shea, staff attorney with CLINIC, is available to local JFI Campaigns to discuss immigration law issues for purposes of organizing local campaigns.

This includes the impact of the current immigration law on undocumented people, what happened under the previous

legalization program back in the 1980s, and how foreign nationals can immigrate to the United States under the current immigration law, etc.

If you are interested in receiving some assistance on immigration issues for organizing your local campaign or you are interested in having Tom speak about immigration law at your local organizing event, then please feel free to contact Tom at Tshea@cliniclegal.org.

