



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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August 1, 2014

Dear Representative:

I write to reaffirm the opposition of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to H.R. 5230 and express our opposition to H.R. 5232.

Our opposition to H.R. 5230 stems from four troubling aspects of the measure. First, it would make crippling changes to current U.S. trafficking victim protection law that we fear would send these vulnerable children, and others in the future who have fled trauma, exploitation, and violence, back into harm's way, likely resulting in continued degradation, injury, and death for many of them. Second, it would not provide adequate funding for the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to enable it to care for vulnerable unaccompanied children in U.S. custody. Third, its level of funding for ORR is so low that it would severely hamper the agency's ability to fulfill its responsibility to care for refugees, asylum seekers, special immigrants, trafficking victims, and torture victims. And fourth, the measure contains no provisions to address the root causes that have compelled so many children to make the arduous journey from their homes in Central America to the United States and elsewhere in the region.

Our opposition to H.R. 5232 stems from its elimination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. It is our view that this program has helped protect a vulnerable group of children who for all extensive purposes are Americans. It would subject them once again to removal to countries they do not know. We urge its defeat.

How our nation responds to this humanitarian challenge is a moral test of our national character. We ask that you oppose H.R. 5230 and H.R. 5232, which we feel fail to live up to that test.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Eusebio Elizondo
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle, WA
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration