

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

Ohio Bishops Statement Opposing the Denial of Workers' Compensation Benefits for Undocumented Workers

June 2, 2017

Background:

The Ohio House recently passed Workers' Compensation legislation ([HB 27](#)) that includes a provision prohibiting undocumented workers from receiving workers' compensation benefits. Workers' Compensation is funded by employers as an insurance policy which provides medical and compensation benefits for work-related injuries, diseases and deaths.

Bishops Statement:

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are opposed to the denial of workers' compensation benefits to undocumented workers.

We have consistently called for meaningful immigration reform. In our [April 2017](#) letter to Congress, we, again, called upon elected officials to address our country's broken immigration system through a comprehensive reform that improves security and creates more legal and transparent paths to immigration.

We do not condone unauthorized entry into the United States. Yet, once undocumented immigrants are here and working, their human dignity itself should guarantee basic compensation and protections for the work they provide.

In our Catholic teaching, work is first and foremost the very expression of the human person in the world and participation in God's creation. When someone engages in work for an employer, that person should receive just remuneration and just worker protections. Respecting a person's human dignity should remain paramount. (*Pope St. John Paul II, [Laborem Exercens](#), nos. 6, 19, 23*)

Workers' compensation is an insurance policy that the employer pays in recognition of the worker's labor. It provides medical and compensation benefits for work-related injuries, diseases and deaths. It should be available to all workers regardless of their legal status. Denying workers' compensation to undocumented workers may result in more abuses by unscrupulous employers to this already often exploited population.

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The Catholic Bishops of Ohio

Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr
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Chairman, Board of Directors,
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Most Rev. Joseph R. Binzer
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Most Rev. Frederick F. Campbell
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Most Rev. William Skurla
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Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Monforton
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Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
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Most Rev. George V. Murry S.J.
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Most Rev. J. Michael Botean
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