



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sister Annmarie Sanders, IHM – LCWR Director of Communications
301-588-4955 (office) -- asanders@lcwr.org
301-672-3043 (cell)
January 30, 2013

LCWR Statement on Immigration Reform Proposals

[Silver Spring, MD] The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) welcomes the release of the bipartisan proposal by Senators Schumer (D-NY), McCain (R-AZ), Durbin (D-IL), Graham (R-SC), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), Bennet (D-CO) and Flake (R-AZ) and President Obama's pledge to work with Congress to fix our nation's broken immigration system.

The Senate framework and the principles laid out in the President's speech in Las Vegas provide hope to our immigrant brothers and sisters and the promise that values that are the bedrock of our national identity will flourish.

We applaud plans, which we hope will quickly become law, that would create a clear and achievable pathway to citizenship for the 11 million individuals who are currently undocumented, including undocumented 'DREAMers'; fix the immigration visa system and reunite separated families; protect the rights of all workers; and promote the integration of newcomers.

However, we also note that the Senate framework leaves room for improvement. It fails to restore due process protections lost in the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and does not address the root causes of migration including poverty, conflict, and persecution that cause people to flee their homelands. Our concerns extend to proposed provisions concerning certification of border security which threaten to effectively block the path to citizenship.

As women of faith we take seriously the gospel call to welcome the stranger and care for those in need. Catholic sisters began coming to these shores 286 years ago as immigrants to serve immigrant populations. To this day they continue to minister to these aspiring citizens in schools and hospitals, in the fields and in the cities. At its 2012 national assembly LCWR, "called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that

includes the reunification of families and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants living in the United States.”

Janet Mock, CSJ , executive director of LCWR, reaffirmed the intention of the LCWR assembly. “We remain committed to seeing fair and compassionate immigration reform enacted in 2013 and look forward to working with the administration as well as senators and representatives across the political spectrum to address these issues.”

LCWR is an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has nearly 1500 members, who represent more than 80 percent of the 57,000 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, the conference assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today’s world.