

January 28, 2026

Dear Members of the United States Senate,

We write to you as Catholic leaders entrusted with the pastoral care of families and communities across our nation. We do so to express our deep opposition to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill scheduled for a vote this week. Our concerns are grounded in [the message issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) in November, which addressed the vilification of immigrants and expressed clear opposition to indiscriminate mass deportation.

Catholic social teaching affirms that the family is the basic unit of society, willed by God and deserving of protection in law and public policy. Recent immigration enforcement actions carried out under DHS authority have heightened our concern that this fundamental principle is being compromised. In many communities, enforcement practices have resulted in families being separated with little warning or recourse.

Parents have been detained without the opportunity to prepare their children. Spouses have lost partners suddenly and without clarity about what will follow. These realities undermine family stability and inflict lasting harm, particularly on children.

For these reasons, we cannot support legislation that expands or sustains enforcement practices without adequately addressing their consequences for families and communities. A DHS budget that prioritizes detention and removal — while lacking strong safeguards for family unity, due process, and accountability — risks entrenching harm rather than promoting justice or public safety.

Recent responses to peaceful protest and public dissent have only intensified concerns about the disproportionate use of force and the erosion of civil liberties.

We urge Senators not to advance funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection in the current appropriations package.

Congress has demonstrated — through bipartisan collaboration on things like affordable housing and access to essential medications — that it is capable of legislating in ways that strengthen families and serve the common good.

Immigration policy should be guided by the same commitment to human dignity and social stability. In particular, we ask that immigration and enforcement policy be shaped by the following principles:

- that **family unity remains a guiding principle** of immigration and enforcement policy;
- that all persons be treated with respect and care in recognition of their inherent dignity;
- that alternatives to detention be prioritized whenever possible;
- and that strong oversight, accountability, and restorative mechanisms be in place to prevent abuses that devastate families and communities.

Our faith calls us to recognize Christ in every person; this includes the migrant, the refugee, and the child who bears the pain of separation. To disregard that suffering is to turn away from a core moral responsibility we share as a society.

We pray that your deliberations will be guided by wisdom and restraint. May your decisions reflect a genuine commitment to protecting families, upholding human dignity, and serving the common good.

Respectfully,

Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe
Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, Archbishop of Seattle
Most Rev. Joseph Tyson, Bishop of Yakima
Most Rev. Michael Pham, Bishop of San Diego
Most Rev. Ramon Bejarano, Bishop-elect of Monterey
Most Rev. Mark Seitz, Bishop of El Paso
Most. Rev. Larry Silva, Bishop of Honolulu
Most Rev. John Stowe, Bishop of Lexington
Most Rev. Felipe Pulido, Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego
Most. Rev. Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, DC
Most Rev. Pedro Bismarck Chau, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark
Most Rev. Elias Lorenzo, OSB, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark
Most Rev. Michael Saporito, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark
Most Rev. Andres Ligot, JCD, Auxiliary Bishop of San Jose
Most Rev. John Ricard, SSJ, Superior General, Saint Joseph's Society of the Sacred Heart (The Josephites)

V. Rev. Brian Paulson, SJ, President, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States
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V. Rev. Karl J. Kiser, S.J., Provincial, USA Midwest Province of Jesuits
V. Rev. Joseph M. O'Keefe, SJ, Provincial, Jesuits East
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Fr. Scott Santarosa, SJ, Pastor, Our Lady of Guadalupe, San Diego, California
Fr. Maurice Nutt, Black Catholic Theological Symposium
Sr. Bethany Welch, SSJ, U.S. Federation of Sisters of Saint Joseph
Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J., Homeboy Industries
Fr. Albert Utzig, Regional Director of Columban Fathers, Omaha, NE
Fr. Stephen Newton, CSC, Association of US Catholic Priests, Notre Dame, IN
Fr. Chris Kellerman, SJ, Secretary of Justice and Ecology, Jesuit Conf. of Canada & the US
Sr. Bridget Bearss, RSCJ, Leadership Conference of Women Religious
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Elvira Ramirez, Exec Dir, Maryknoll Lay Missioners, El Paso TX
Kevin Foy, Exec Dir, United States Catholic Mission Association, Munster IN
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Christian Bentley, Saint Joseph Catholic Church/The Josephites, Alexandria, VA
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Jean Hill, Exec Dir, Washington State Catholic Conference, Seattle WA
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