



CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES

STATEMENT OF CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S JANUARY 2017 EXECUTIVE ORDERS ON IMMIGRATION

February 1, 2017

Catholic Migration Services opposes any laws or government policies that discriminate against people based on their race, religion, or national origin, and we are committed to supporting the rights of all immigrants to have due process in their efforts to secure and retain lawful status in our country. We believe the January 25 and 27 Executive Orders issued by the President unfairly target Muslims and other immigrants, in violation of these fundamental principles of fairness and equality. Among other harms that these Orders have and will continue to cause, they will prevent United States residents from reuniting with family members currently abroad, and close our borders to refugees fleeing life-threatening conditions in Syria and elsewhere. As an organization that is firmly committed to “welcoming the stranger in our midst,” we strongly disagree with these Executive Orders. Our nation can and must do better in demonstrating the compassion towards those seeking political, economic or social refuge that is a hallmark of our country’s history.

In the face of these government actions, Catholic Migration Services is hard at work assisting immigrants in the Brooklyn and Queens communities. Among other efforts, Catholic Migration Services is:

- Helping hundreds of immigrants obtain visas, lawful permanent resident status, and citizenship. The Executive Orders complicate, but do not eliminate, the rights of immigrants to obtain lawful status. In fact, on January 28th, at a workshop held at the offices of the Brooklyn Borough President, Catholic Migration Services helped more than 90 lawful permanent residents fill out applications to naturalize and become citizens, while meeting with an additional 75 individuals who were considering naturalization.
- Defending immigrants from deportation. Our attorneys represent scores of immigrants facing deportation, but who may have a valid basis to stay in our country and achieve lawful status, such as by gaining political asylum.
- Informing immigrants about their rights. Catholic Migration Services will be distributing information in print and at live informational sessions in the Brooklyn and Queens communities to provide reliable information about changes in the immigration laws and their enforcement.
- Warning immigrants about scams and frauds. Sadly, many unscrupulous immigration service providers see times like this as an opportunity to take advantage of vulnerable immigrants by scaring them into paying thousands of dollars for immigration services that at best will produce no benefit, and at worst can lead to deportation. Our attorneys are meeting with community groups to warn them about these fraudulent schemes.

For more information about how to access our services, or for more information about how you can support our work, please visit our website, www.catholicmigration.org.

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