



COLORADO CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

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Statement by Colorado bishops regarding May 1st walkout

In recent months national concern over immigration has grown. Not only is it an issue that is politically, socially and economically charged; it also sparks in many people a desire for action that results in change. But as emotions rise, they have the potential to do more harm to the community than good.

As we near May 1, some are calling for a job and school walk-out. We, the bishops of Colorado, urge the community to *not* take part in this "Day without Immigrants." Real immigration reform requires reasonable dialogue and positive actions that persuade our elected officials. Walk-outs, as well-intentioned as they may be, do not serve that end.

Walk-outs will hurt many business owners and employers who already support fair immigration reform. They endanger the very jobs that immigrants have come so far to fill and work so hard to maintain. They also frustrate those who are undecided. We urge all people affected by the immigration debate to go to work, to go to school and to show the state and country the contributions that immigrants bring to Colorado. While immigrants have long felt overlooked, America's eyes will be open on May 1. This day is an opportunity to demonstrate the many ways in which you contribute to this community.

Workers, we urge you to go to work. Devote time to helping employers and communities understand the dignity of work through your contribution to our economy and your respect for your employer and your job.

Students, we urge you to stay in school. Demonstrate your understanding of the value of education so we might count on your leadership in years to come.

Parents and teachers, we urge you to lead by example and motivate young people to stay in school by instilling in them the value of education. Give students an opportunity in school to show solidarity with immigrant communities.

Catholics and all people of good will, we urge you to take part in positive actions that lead to real solutions. Write to legislators and encourage employers and business owners to write also, demanding immigration reform that includes secure borders, paths to permanent residency, temporary worker programs, family reunification, labor protections for all workers, and wages and benefits that do not undercut domestic workers.

We invite all Catholic communities -- parishes, schools, families and associations -- to make the month of May a month of prayer for justice for immigrants. During May, the month of Mary, we ask Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of the Americas, to pray for us.

+Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver

+Most Reverend Arthur Tafoya, D.D.
Bishop of Pueblo

+Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan, S.T.D.
Bishop of Colorado Springs