

# CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

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## **Opponent Testimony: HB 380 Denying workers' compensation to undocumented workers November 29, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Brinkman, Vice-Chairman Henne, Ranking Minority Member Bocchieri, and members of the Insurance Committee. My name is Jim Tobin. I am an Associate Director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic community, like so many other faith communities across the state, has many shared experiences with immigrant families throughout Ohio. The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are opposed to the denial of workers' compensation benefits to undocumented workers.

The Catholic Church has consistently called for meaningful immigration reform to address our country's broken immigration system. We continue to urge Congress to enact comprehensive reform that improves security and creates more legal and transparent paths to immigration.

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio 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.

We encourage you to oppose HB 380. Thank you for this opportunity.