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KANSAS STATEHOUSE OFFICE
Kansas Catholic Conference
204 SW 8th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66603

Date: February 12, 2025

To: Chairman Tom Kessler and members of the House State and Federal Affairs Committee

From: Chuck Weber, executive director, Kansas Catholic Conference

RE: WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR SCR 1602

Chairman Kessler and members of the committee:

My name is Chuck Weber, and I serve as executive director of the Kansas Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 1602.

We stand as advocates in favor of SCR1602 — Encouraging the governor to fully cooperate with federal enforcement of immigration laws.

We know that this issue of immigration is complex and complicated—and that solutions have been too easily discarded in past years, leading us to the crisis we face today.

Those elected to lead our nation are responsible to protect the integrity of our country and keep safe the citizens of the United States. Allowing violent gangs, individuals with serious criminal histories, dealers of lethal illegal drugs, human traffickers and those who pose threats to our national security to enter our country and harm U.S. citizens is a serious dereliction of duty by our elected leaders. We commend President Trump and those in his administration for addressing this serious, national threat.

At the same time, we believe Catholics--indeed all Americans--have a moral responsibility to advocate for the recognition of the dignity of every human being who, created in the Divine Image, is of such worth that Jesus gave His life on Calvary. The Catholic Church has an obligation to care for every person with respect and love, no matter their citizenship status. The Catholic Church in Kansas and elsewhere will continue providing human services that our government has a moral responsibility to provide, within the context of our civil laws.

These two positions are not in conflict, and in fact, compliment each other.

The long-term solution to the immigration issue begins with a secure border, where we know who enters our country and why they seek to reside in the United States. The government has a responsibility to prevent bad actors from entering our nation.

At the same time, our country, one of the most prosperous the world has ever known, should be a place of opportunity for people seeking a better life. Elected leaders, prompted by their constituents, should get about the serious business of establishing a generous legal immigration policy that welcomes refugees and immigrants in orderly way, preserving our nation's security, and making clear the responsibilities that come with citizenship.

This policy must welcome immigrants beyond their ability to bring particular skills and expertise that will benefit our country. If that was the only criteria for accepting immigrants or refugees, many, if not most of our ancestors would never have made the cut.

Historically, immigrants have been instrumental in renewing our country, not because they had advanced degrees or technological skills, but because they loved the American dream. They cherished the freedoms U.S. citizens enjoy and the opportunities to better provide for themselves and their families.

This is but a brief overview of our thoughts on the immigration question. Bottom line, we stand in support of the State of Kansas cooperating with enforcement of immigration—while at the same time recognizing the human dignity of the migrant. Working together, we seek a just and workable immigration policy.

If you have any questions concerning this process, please feel free to contact Mr. Gerald “Chuck” Weber, Executive Director, at (316) 708-5350.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Weber". The signature is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Chuck" being more prominent than the last name "Weber".

Gerald C “Chuck” Weber

316-708-5350

Chuck@KansasCatholic.org