

World & Nation

Extension for aliens called error 'on the side of humanity'

By Laurie Hansen
 Washington (NC) — Extending the deadline for alien legalization would be "to err on the side of humanity," said Rep. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., a day after the House of Representatives voted narrowly in favor of delaying the May deadline.

The House voted 213-201 April 20 to lengthen by six months the time for applying for legalization. A similar bill is before the Senate.

The congressman made the comments in Washington April 21 at the 11th Annual National Legal Conference on Immigration and Refugee Policy, sponsored by the Center of Migration Studies of New York, Inc.

Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of Newark, N.J., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration, and Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahony are among those who urged Congress to extend the alien legalization period for one year. President Reagan, however, has said he will veto any legislation to extend the deadline.

Under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, those who have resided illegally in the United States since before Jan. 1, 1982, had until May 4, 1988, to apply for legal status. The proposed legislation would push the deadline back to November 30.

"Do we know how many eligible people haven't applied for legalization? No, we don't," Schumer said. "Maybe 90 percent, maybe 40 percent. We don't know."

What is known, said the congressman, is that "the cost to society of maintaining an underclass far exceeds the cost of extending the legalization program."

"It's a simple question of are we going to err on the side of humanity? Are we going to be humane?" said Schumer, who had sponsored a bill to extend the deadline one year before shifting his support to a bill favoring the six-month extension, sponsored by Rep. Romano L. Mazzoli, D-Ken.

Another conference speaker, Gilbert Paul Carrasco, director of immigration services for the U.S. Catholic Conference's division of Migration and Refugee Services, said one of the reasons Congress passed the 1986 immigration reform law was to "wipe the slate clean" as far as illegal immigration was concerned.

Yet, said Carrasco, the nation is going to be "left with substantially more people

ineligible than we had eligible and applying for legalization."

A report issued in February by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace predicts the size of the U.S. illegal population not qualifying for legalization will be almost twice the number legalized.

Carrasco praised the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for making the legalization program "fair and reasonable," for attempting to hire "courteous staff" to attend alien applicants, and for seeking input on regulations proposed by INS to implement the immigration reform law.

Carrasco said to date church-affiliated "qualified designated entities" or QDEs had been responsible for 23 percent of the

estimated 1.6 million legalization applications submitted nationwide. "That's no small number," said Carrasco.

A QDE is an agency contracting with the federal government to assist aliens apply for amnesty in an official capacity.

Few have acknowledged that the price of applying for legalization may prohibit some applicants from obtaining legalized status, according to Carrasco. "In our El Paso office, there is a stack of applications ready to go — the only thing not there are the checks to INS," he said.

To finance the legalization program, INS is charging families \$420 and individuals \$185 to apply.

Cardinal O'Connor, Castro discuss 'bridges to peace'

By Gerald M. Costello
 Havana, Cuba (NC) — Cuban President Fidel Castro, during a late-night talk with visiting New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor, indicated willingness to meet several requests including proposals that he release more political prisoners, allow more foreign nuns to work in Cuba, and explore a joint effort to assist AIDS patients.

Castro indicated support for the cardinal's requests during a nearly three-hour meeting that began April 20 and ended at 2:30 a.m. the next day, Cardinal O'Connor told Catholic New York, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New York.

The cardinal was in Cuba April 18-22 at the invitation of the Cuban bishops' conference. He participated in celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of

Father Felix Varela, a Cuban hero who served in the Archdiocese of New York after his exile in the 1800s.

Cardinal O'Connor said Castro seemed pleased with the concept of the Church as a "bridge for peace," which the cardinal repeated throughout his trip. "He seemed intrigued by it," the prelate said.

Some of the items the two men discussed would serve as "bricks in such a bridge," the cardinal said, citing:

- The release of more than 400 political prisoners.
- The immediate issue of visas for additional foreign nuns to work in Cuba.
- An agreement to explore a cooperative effort on behalf of AIDS patients that would involve the archdiocese-affiliated New York Medical College and other Catholic health

care agencies in the Archdiocese of New York.


In addition, Castro indicated willingness to permit visits to ailing Cubans by members of their families residing in the United States.

"I told President Castro that he has a tremendous opportunity to use the Church in the right sense of the word," the cardinal said.

Cardinal O'Connor said he would look into Castro's complaint that medicines sorely needed in Cuba are being unfairly embargoed by the U.S. government.

The cardinal said he supposed "a lot of people feel I've been exploited, and that I permitted Castro to use me."

"These are risks taken for the good of souls," the cardinal said.



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