

WORLD & NATION

House considers immigration bill

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The House Judiciary Committee Oct. 24 approved a bill that reduces the number of legal immigrants to the country by one-third, cuts immigrants' access to government benefits and beefs up illegal immigration controls.

The U.S. Catholic Conference opposes to many elements of the House bill and its Senate counterpart. The USCC particularly opposed provisions that cut off immigrants from tax-supported benefits and that would establish a nationwide employment verification system.

The House measure, approved in a 23-10 vote, would cut the number of legal immigrants from the current level of 835,000 a year to 595,000 by 2001. It also would tighten controls on illegal immigration and end nearly all federal benefits for children whose parents are in the country illegally, even if the children are legal residents or U.S. citizens.

The Senate Judiciary Committee had yet to vote on its immigration bill.

Among dozens of amendment considered for the House bill, the panel approved one that would forbid federal agencies from allowing any benefits except subsidized school lunches to go to the children of illegal immigrants, even if the juveniles are in the country legally.

Current law has no specific quotas for individual countries under a category that now allows 55,000 people who do not fit under family or employment-related admissions.

Under the compromise amendment the following number would be admitted from these regions:

Europe: 12,000 from among Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Turkey, Germany, Ireland, Bulgaria, Armenia and Albania.

Africa: 10,000 from among Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Senegal and Liberia.

North America: 100 from Mexico and the Bahamas.

Asia: 2,700 from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Iran, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan, Burma, Afghanistan and Indonesia.

Oceania: 900 from Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

South and Central America and the Caribbean: 1,400 from Peru, Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil and Haiti.



Reuters/RNS

Rally for Sovereignty

Two girls with their faces painted with fleur-de-lis, cheer at a pro-sovereignty rally in Quebec City Oct. 22. By a narrow margin, the people of Quebec voted Oct. 30 to remain in Canada.

Society strives to meet catechism demand

By Mark Nacinovich
Catholic News Service

HARTFORD, Conn. (CNS) — The Xavier Society for the Blind has produced three versions of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the visually impaired.

But it says demand is so high it doesn't have the resources to meet it.

The New York-based society has produced 10 copies of the catechism in each of three formats: Braille, large print and audiotape.

But about 200 people have requested copies, said Robert Nealon, the society's librarian.

"This is the largest single item we've ever had as far as requests," he told *The Catholic Transcript*, newspaper of the Hartford Archdiocese, in a telephone interview. "People might be on the wait-

ing list for a long time."

Jesuit Father Alfred Caruana, the society's executive director, said, "Persons blessed with sight who have read the catechism know that it contains a wealth of material for reflection, discussion, prayer and personal enrichment.

"The Xavier Society for the Blind has invested so much of its resources simply to produce the Braille, large print and audio cassette 'masters' of the catechism that additional support is needed to meet the growing demand for copies," he said.

"Right now we don't have the budget to produce extra copies," he said.

The society relies on private donors for funding. It loans materials from its library free, for a period of up to six months, to some 10,000 visually impaired people in the United States and Canada and about 600 people overseas.

To help satisfy the demand for the catechism, the society has divided the Braille and large-print versions into four parts, sending people only one part at a time so that up to 40 people can have access to each version at the same time.

That division was also a practical one because of the sheer size of the work. About 800 pages in normal print editions, the catechism runs three to four volumes for each part in the large print

version, and the Braille is even larger.

The cassette version takes up 25 90-minute cassettes, or more than 35 hours of playing time, not counting the footnotes. The footnotes are available on a separate set of 10 cassettes.

Father Caruana said the society, which has a staff of 14 and many volunteers, devoted every spare moment for eight months to producing the catechism in the three formats.

Nealon said the audio-cassette version was completed in May, and the other two were finished in June. Since Pope John Paul II's visit in early October, the society has received a new round of requests for the catechism, he said.

Founded by the Jesuits in 1900, the Xavier Society for the Blind has an extensive library of religious literature that it lends out. It also produces several periodicals for the visually impaired.

Father Caruana said the society was just starting to survey its members to learn how many of them would have use for materials in computer format and what their requirements would be.

Editor's note: For more information contact: Xavier Society for the Blind, 154 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010. Telephone (212) 473-7800 or fax (212) 473-7801.

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