

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-7715

PHONE (850) 205-6820  
FAX (850) 205-6849  
WWW.FLACCB.ORG

MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



November 17, 2015

The Honorable Carlos Trujillo  
Room 417, The Capitol  
402 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

## ***RE: Opposition to HB 9 and Proposed Committee Amendment***

Dear Chairman Trujillo:

We respect your efforts to address immigration problems in our state. However, we oppose HB 9 and the proposed committee substitute amendment. As the amendment is likely to become the bill given its posture, our comments are to the proposed amendment.

### ***Immigration is a Federal Issue – Not a State Issue; Bill Copies but Adds to Federal Law***

The U.S. Constitution establishes that the federal government has primacy over immigration violations. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Arizona v. United States*, struck down provisions in Arizona's immigration enforcement law that criminalized immigration law violations. While it largely reiterates current federal law, the proposed amendment takes a federal violation for illegal reentry and creates a new state felony with a much stronger penalty.

### ***Problematic Results for Future Comprehensive Immigration Reform Efforts***

We are hopeful that federal reform can someday provide a pathway to legal status in the U.S. for those who are currently undocumented. Your legislation would almost certainly prevent future legal adjustment of the status of those convicted of this new felony (because of their felony records). This is a foreseeable negative consequence of the proposal.

### ***Undocumented Contribute to Economy; Legislation Has Negative Economic Impacts***

While we do not advocate for undocumented immigration into the U.S., undocumented persons contribute to our state's economy and tax base as consumers. This legislation would require further enforcement by local and state law enforcement and add burdens to our prison system by incarcerating those who otherwise contribute to our economic growth.

### ***Better Legislative Path: Resolution in Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform***

In place of a problematic bill, we urge the House to send a resolution to Florida's congressional delegation in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Honorable Kathleen Passidomo, Chair, and Members of the House Civil Justice Subcommittee  
Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President  
Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of Venice & FCCB Justice & Peace Moderator  
Ingrid M. Delgado, Associate for Social Concerns/Respect Life