



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 21, 2006

For more information, contact
Pat Chivers, Director of Communications
404-885-7420(office), 678-4809-6865 (cell)
pchivers@archatl.com

CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND NORTH CAROLINA SEND CONGRESS A MESSAGE ON IMMIGRATION

ATLANTA – In conjunction with the other bishops of the Province of Atlanta, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory sent a letter this week to those working in Congress, urging their continuing focus on the passage of “comprehensive and fair” immigration reform at a national level. Bishop Robert J. Baker of the Diocese of Charleston, S.C., Bishop J. Kevin Boland of the Diocese of Savannah, Bishop Michael Burbidge of the Diocese of Raleigh, N.C., and Bishop Peter J. Jugis of the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., all joined with Archbishop Gregory to send the letter, signed by all five bishops, to the senators and representatives for their respective states.

Archbishop Gregory spearheaded this effort, taking advantage of the U.S. bishops’ meeting in Baltimore to meet with the other bishops and ask them to join him in this effort. Believing their collective voices to have a stronger impact, the bishops hope to encourage the members of the U.S. Congress to continue to work together for comprehensive reform, remembering the humanity of those who have moved here from other countries to seek a better life for their families.

The bishops stated, “We support these reforms because every day we witness the human consequences of an immigration system which is severely flawed,” expressing their strong belief that “immigration is a moral concern impacting the human dignity and human rights of every person.”

They were specific about what they believe to be the essential elements of reform, including “policies to address the economic root causes of migration in the sending countries; reform of our legal immigration system, including a viable and workable path to citizenship; a temporary worker program which protects the rights of all workers; family-based immigration reform which reduces waiting times for family reunification; and the restoration of due process protections for immigrants.”

The ultimate goal of this letter is political action to enact legislation to “help heal our communities and provide for a secure and prosperous future for all our children.” As the bishops said, “These individuals have become a vital part of the fabric of our local areas and make substantial contributions to our economic and social life.”

###