



March 17, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Rodriguez, esteemed members of the committee and bill sponsors.

My name is Brittany Vessely. I am the executive director of the Colorado Catholic Conference (CCC), which is the united voice of the four Catholic bishops of Colorado on public policy issues. I am speaking on behalf of the conference this afternoon to testify in **support** of SB-77.

The first principle of Catholic social teaching regarding immigration is that *all* people have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families. This is based on Biblical teaching that the goods of the earth belong to all people.

The Catholic Church also celebrates immigrants as valuable contributors to our economy and warns against policies and institutions that either exploit or exclude immigrants in the labor force. While the Church recognizes the role of a sovereign state to enforce its immigration laws, it also encourages the acceptance and welcoming of immigrants who currently reside in the country.

The Colorado is home to many immigrants – including many Catholics — who are trying to integrate themselves and their families into our beautiful state. Employment is an important way to facilitate this integration as they work to achieve lawful status. It is important that we advocate for better pathways to citizenship, but it is equally important our community allow non-citizens the ability to work, which ultimately promotes human dignity and flourishing for themselves, their families, and our society.

Currently, there are many undocumented immigrants who have God-given talents and are ready and eager to contribute to our economy but are barred from doing so due to existing law. State licensing exists to ensure that workers hold a level of qualification for a given position. Licensing does not exist to exclude qualified workers based solely on their immigration status. The passage of SB-77 would allow Coloradans, citizens and noncitizens alike, to thrive.

The Colorado Catholic Conference urges support of SB-77 for the benefit of *all* members of our community. Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,



Brittany Vessely
Executive Director, Colorado Catholic Conference