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CLINIC APPLAUDS IMMIGRATION ACTION FOR DREAMERS

Washington, D.C. (June 15, 2012) The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) welcomes the announcement by President Barack Obama and the Department of Homeland Security that deferred action will be granted to certain eligible undocumented immigrant youth. Many of these immigrants who entered by age 16 would qualify for relief under the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.

The new policy will afford work authorization and protection from removal to an estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000 young people ages 15-30. Often referred to as DREAMers, these individuals came to this country as young children and now seek a better future in this, the only home many of them have ever known.

Those who qualify, including individuals currently in removal proceedings, will be granted protection against removal as well as work authorization for a renewable period of two years. This new policy does not confer permanent legal immigration status on the individual.

"This proper exercise of the President's executive authority will change the lives of many undocumented youth who have long lived in the shadows without being able to contribute their gifts and talents to this great nation," says Maria M. Odom, executive director of CLINIC. "While not a permanent repair to our broken immigration system, this action recognizes the plight of these youth and provides a renewed opportunity for bipartisan support for both the DREAM Act, and for comprehensive immigration reform."

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will create an application process in the next 60 days. CLINIC and its network of more than 200 charitable legal service providers will work to ensure the widest access possible to this process for eligible low income and vulnerable applicants.

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