



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3784

MICHAEL C. CULHANE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
  
DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS  
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
MARCH 26, 2009  
HB 6245 – AN ACT CONCERNING  
THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
TASK FORCE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Good morning, Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Michael Culhane and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Catholic Conference.

I am here today to express the support of the Conference for HB 6245 – *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Task Force on Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities*.

Based on numerous reports from pastors in predominantly immigrant parishes, the Catholic Conference approached then Speaker James Amann during the 2008 Session of the General Assembly and expressed our interest in establishing a Task Force to study the issue of domestic violence against immigrant women and children. In early 2008, the Conference had discussed this issue with members of several commissions, coalitions and other organizations to elicit their opinions on this subject, and we came to the conclusion that this issue was broad enough, wide enough, and deep enough to hopefully be studied by our State Legislature. It is for this reason that I am very grateful to former Speaker James Amann for establishing this Task Force, with special thanks to Representative Gerald Fox of Stamford and Representative Tom Reynolds of Gales Ferry for serving as co-chairmen of the Task Force.

Being a member of this Task Force has been a rewarding experience for me. Realizing that immigrant women and children in an abusive situation would be fearful to report a violent act against them for fear of being “caught up” in any subsequent legal proceeding, I was initially interested in pursuing the impact of U-Visas and T-Visas as they relate to these violent situations and how their use would

benefit the victims. As our Task Force meetings evolved, we found ourselves discussing various aspects of victim services, offender management and advances in the training and services within the judicial system and within the field of law enforcement.

I believe the Findings and Recommendations of the Task Force regarding the improvement in the staffing of 24/7 shelters, translation services, programs for female offenders, and services for victims filing for U-Visa protection—to mention only a few areas of concern—will hopefully go a long way in keeping immigrant women and children out of harm's way.

In conclusion, please know that the members of this Task Force focused diligently on the many issues facing our immigrant population in Connecticut. They clearly exercised their best efforts in establishing the Findings and Recommendations which form the basis of HB 6245 and it is for these reasons that the Connecticut Catholic Conference fully supports this legislative effort.



---

Michael C. Culhane  
Executive Director