



May 18, 2017

Don't Criminalize Work of the Sisters. Don't Pass Davis-Oliver Act.
Statement by Lawrence E. Couch
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"Beware of correcting a whole class for the misbehavior of a few. That could have serious consequences..." Saint Mary Euphrasia (Foundress of Sisters of the Good Shepherd)

Faith communities from around the country have been standing strong for several years against the ill-conceived legislation known as the Davis-Oliver Act. Once again, this bill has been introduced in Congress and once again we all stand ready to oppose it and to ensure that Members of Congress and the general public recognize it as the anti-immigrant, fear-mongering bill that it is.

The Davis-Oliver Act would harm community safety, expand detention of immigrants, encourage racial profiling, federalize local police and actually criminalize some of the humanitarian works of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

One disturbing and frustratingly naïve section of this bill would hinder the very public safety that our law enforcement members are sworn to protect. Officials across the country already are complaining about a drop in crime reporting. Not because of a drop in crime, but because members of the community now are too fearful to call the police. This bill only will make matters worse and our streets less safe and the people in our midst even more vulnerable to criminal elements.

And then there is the worry we now must carry on behalf of those who serve the undocumented community. This legislation would criminalize people of faith, volunteers, clergy, and men and women religious.

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd has had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. The Sisters and their Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization. Our programs address the social, psychological and economic needs of thousands of persons/families on low-income in 22 states and 1 U.S. Territory.

If one of our sisters, or any person of good will, takes in a battered undocumented woman, she could face years of imprisonment under this legislation. And then, some people of goodwill may be deterred from offering support, thereby forcing many women back to their abusers.

This nation has a long history of welcoming immigrants. Women religious have consistently been on the forefront accompanying and serving immigrant communities. Good Shepherd Sisters remain committed to welcoming and aiding all those in need.

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd calls on Congress to oppose the Davis-Oliver Act and work instead to reform and update our immigration system.