News



Catholics participate in a prayer service in support of Dreamers on Capitol Hill Feb. 6. (Heidi Schlumpf)



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At a Catholic prayer service to support "Dreamers," a special rendition of "Amazing Grace" was offered for House Speaker Paul Ryan, in the hopes that he would allow a vote on a bill that would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children.

"If the Dream Act gets on the floor, it will pass," U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas of California told about 100 Catholics and others who gathered in front of the U.S. Capitol Feb. 6.

Vargas urged prayers for fellow Catholic lawmaker Ryan, "that Jesus touch his heart and allow the bill to come to the floor."

"We want to make sure that these young people are protected, and their families," Vargas said.

As the group prayed the rosary, reports emerged that White House Chief of Staff John Kelly said that President Trump was not expected to extend the March 5 deadline for "Dreamers," making the need for lawmakers to act all the more urgent.

Attendees at the prayer service included Dreamers, priests, religious women, faith organization workers and some attendees from the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, a four-day conference held in Washington D.C.

"We need to live up to the words on the Statue of Liberty," said Holy Names Sr. Carol Ries, who attended the prayer service with other religious women from her order.

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Holy Names Sr. Susan Wells, from Washington State, was headed to the Capitol building to meet with legislators, as part of a day of lobbying that was part of the social ministry conference. Immigration issues — especially those affecting young undocumented immigrants — were one of three priorities for the day of lobbying, along with domestic safety net programs and international development aid.

Hosting organizations for the prayer service included the Daughters of Charity, Network Catholic social justice lobby, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Franciscan Action Network, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and others.

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