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Bishop to contact Iowa congressman about immigrants comment

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

Last week, I read a Bloomberg News story about Iowa Catholic Republican Congressman Steve King denouncing President Barack Obama's recent decision to allow young nondocumented people a two-year window to seek temporary relief from deportation proceedings and apply for work authorization. King, who highlights his Catholicism in the first paragraph of his official congressional biography, referred to immigrants as "dogs" and announced that he plans to file a lawsuit in an attempt to prevent the implementation of the president's decision.

So I sent a few questions to Sioux City diocesan media officials on whether Bishop Walter Nickless will be correcting King's reference to immigrants as dogs as patently un-Catholic (You know, the whole "made in the image and likeness of God" language.) and whether the diocese plans to argue that such a lawsuit, if successful, will hurt immigrants and their families, especially since the U.S. bishops' teaching document, "Faithful Citizenship," argues for just immigration policies.

On Friday, Nickless' media person, Kristie Arlt, came back to me and informed me that Nickless plans on being in contact with King in the near future on this important issue and offered this comment from Bishop Nickless:

"I have not had the chance to talk to the Representative about these issues. I would like to understand King's position before I make any kind of comments."

-- The Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless, bishop of Sioux City.

Certainly that's fair enough. I've asked for an interview on this topic after Nickless has had an opportunity to talk to King.

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