

October 3, 2007

Beyond Shelter  
Transitional Housing

Anchorage Assembly  
632 W. 6th Avenue Suite 250  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Brother Francis Shelter  
Anchorage

Dear Anchorage Assembly,

Charlie Elder House

The goal of all Catholic Social Services (CSS) programs is to provide critically needed services with the utmost respect for human dignity. Therefore, CSS is philosophically opposed to Ordinance #AO No. 2007-125.

Clare House

McAuley Manor

CSS' Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services program is based on the biblical mission to "Welcome the Stranger." In order to fulfill this very important mission, the program provides intensive services for refugees who were provided safety and sanctuary by the United States Government due to their experience of persecution in their country of origin. In addition, this program provides limited immigration services to assist immigrants to apply for and receive proper immigration documentation to be able to live and work in the United States.

Pregnancy Support  
& Adoption Services

Refugee Assistance  
& Immigration Services

Special Needs Services

St. Francis House

CSS fears public safety will be compromised if Ordinance #AO No. 2007-125 were to go into effect. Immigrants with and without documentation will be extremely fearful of going to law enforcement for help. Hence, if someone is a victim of a crime but does not have proper documents or has lost a document, they will likely avoid reporting this crime. This means that the perpetrator is not brought to the attention of law enforcement; allowing the possibility of danger to others. Engendering fear of authority is not a value we want to replicate. In America, we take pride in ensuring that all people can seek the protection of law enforcement and in this manner, law enforcement is able to keep the entire community better protected and served. Consequently, the desire to implement immigration regulations should not impede law enforcements primary job – public safety.

Since all US citizens at this time do not carry proof of immigration status we fear that implementation of this ordinance will lead to racial profiling. The process of asking for documentation will fall to law enforcement's subjective judgment (of who might not be here with proper status). The targeting of individuals with darker skin, unusual clothing or an accent will be impossible to avoid.

Catholic Social Services respectfully asks you to reject Ordinance #AO No. 2007-125 in light of the severe negative impact of its implementation on human dignity and public safety.

Sincerely,



Susan H. Bomalaski, Ph.D., LPC  
Executive Director



Karen Ferguson, Ph.D.  
RAIS Program Director  
State of Alaska Refugee  
Coordinator

CC: Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz  
Mayor Mark Begich  
Superintendent Carol Comeau  
Chief Rob Heun  
Hispanic Affairs Council of Alaska  
Anchorage Faith & Action Congregations Together