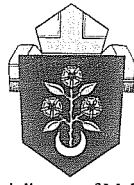
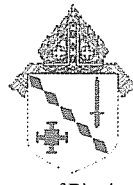


United Methodist Church



Archdiocese of Mobile



Diocese of Birmingham  
in Alabama



Episcopal Diocese of Alabama



Saint Bernard Abbey

December 19, 2011

Dear Governor Bentley:

We are writing to let you know that we are praying for you as you consider the multitude of problems caused by the Beason-Hammon Act. In this time when we celebrate the greatest of gifts, we pray that you will show great political courage and leadership and support the repeal of this unfortunate piece of legislation that has brought such heartache to our State. Short of that, we pray that you and the other leaders of our State will work together to make much-needed revisions to an unjust and unfair law, bearing in mind certain principles upon which our country is based and which we take the liberty of discussing below.

We believe that any revision to this law must respect the federal constitution and that for which it stands. Any proposed revisions should complement the federal laws on immigration. People of faith must be free to exercise their religious beliefs in loving their neighbors, whoever they are, without fear of persecution or prosecution.

All people, whether undocumented immigrants or native-born, are human beings entitled to certain basic human rights. The federal immigration law recognizes this fact, and the revised legislation should unequivocally acknowledge and accept the same reality.

Children should not be used, intentionally or not, as a means to intimidate their parents or other relatives. Our schools must be safe havens for children, and not battlegrounds in the struggle over illegal immigration.

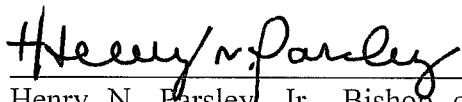
We share the concerns of many of our law enforcement officers who say that our State's law enforcement resources have been severely taxed by this law, and there remains much confusion about its proper application. In its current form, this law could be used to treat people poorly. Alabama does not need to return to a time when laws were used to vent hate for others and to justify mistreating people. If criminal sanctions are to be a part of a revised law, we ask that the criminal sanctions reflect the principle of proportionality, i.e., the punishment should fit the crime.

In this time of goodwill towards all, we must take care to remember the least of these who are among us. We ask that the following basic needs be ensured to all people who live in our State: access to adequate housing, public utilities, access to health care, education and the right to participate freely in religious worship and activities.

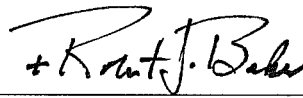
We fully respect the responsibility our local, State, and federal governments have in protecting our country's borders. Our prayer is that you will have the courage to resolve this issue fairly and humanely doing what is right for all the people of our great State. In this holy season of our Lord's birth, we remember that our Biblical charge to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God is over 2000 years old. We pray you keep close its meaning and moral imperative as you work to right this legislative wrong.

If we can provide any assistance, please do not hesitate to call upon us. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to be included in the process.

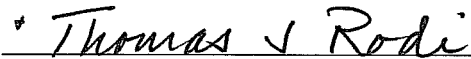
With every good wish,



Henry N. Parsley, Jr., Bishop of the  
Episcopal Church in the Diocese of  
Alabama



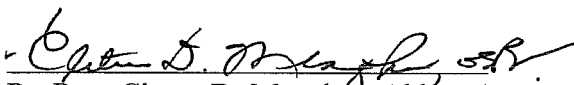
The Most Rev. Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.  
Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama



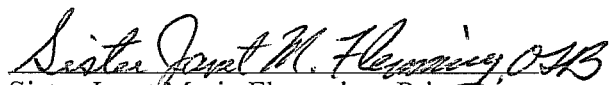
Most Rev. Thomas J. Rodi, Archbishop  
of Mobile



William H. Willimon, Bishop,  
Birmingham Area of The United  
Methodist Church



Rt. Rev. Cletus D. Meagher, Abbot  
Benedictine Society of Alabama



Sister Janet Marie Flemming, Prioress  
Benedictine Sisters of Cullman,  
Alabama, Inc.