

# **Punitive and Productive Immigration Legislation Moving in the States**

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**Washington, D.C.** - After passage of Arizona's controversial SB1070 law last year, other states threatened to introduce similar measures. South Carolina, Mississippi, and Nebraska have already begun working on SB1070-style legislation. Meanwhile, legislators seeking true solutions have begun pursuing progressive immigration policies. On a teleconference yesterday, immigration policy experts discussed the ramifications of pursuing anti-immigrant legislation as well as alternatives to SB1070, many which seek to boost economic and job growth on the state level.

**Jonathan Blazer, Policy Attorney at the National Immigration Law Center, said:** "As in past years, states will continue to consider both restrictive and inclusive immigration-related legislation in a broad range of areas, including employment, education, and law enforcement. We expect to see enactment of Arizona copycats in some states, perhaps first in South Carolina. However, the fact that a court has enjoined core provisions of the Arizona bill from being implemented has given pause to some states. Yet other states seem to welcome the confrontation, and with it the legal costs and harm to the economy and tax base. When it comes to immigrant bashing, for some legislators, fiscal conservatism seems to fly out the window."

**Vivek Malhotra, Advocacy and Policy Counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union, said:** "In many states across the country, constitutionally suspect, discriminatory bills are becoming a distraction from pressing needs that the legislature actually has some control over, like balancing budgets or stimulating job growth. The federal court's decision to block core provisions in Arizona's racial-profiling law is having a deterrent effect on other states considering copycat bills. They know this unconstitutional approach to immigration enforcement is likely to embroil them in costly litigation at the taxpayer's expense."

**Michele Waslin, Senior Policy Analyst at the Immigration Policy Center, said:** "These battles are taking place at a time when states are facing severe budget crises, and people have to recognize that these immigration bills would be very expensive to implement. States would face the high costs of arresting, processing, detaining, and prosecuting a large number of people. Since these laws will be challenged in court, state taxpayers will have to bear the litigation costs. Furthermore, undocumented immigrants and their families are workers, taxpayers, and consumers, and if they leave a state, it means lost tax revenue, lost productivity, and lost consumers."

**Suman Raghunathan, Immigration Policy Specialist at Progressive States Network, said:** "There is a story that isn't often told. We see a diverse and rapidly growing group of legislators from 32 states who understand the reality of immigrants and immigration and are crafting common-sense proposals at the state level. These proposals expand economic opportunity for all residents, both immigrant and native-born, keep communities safe, and preserve workers' rights. Proposals include tuition equity legislation, which offers undocumented students in-state tuition so they can attend college; wage-enforcement and workers' rights legislation, which goes after bad-apple employers who bypass their responsibilities; community-policing legislation, which builds trust between law enforcement and communities; as well efforts that support immigrant, small-business entrepreneurs."

**To hear a recording of the entire briefing visit:**

- [Telebriefing: Is Arizona-like "Papers Please" Legislation Coming to Your State?](#) [1]

**For a list of other resources see:**

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Published on Immigration Policy Center (<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org>)

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- [Responding to State Immigration Legislation: A Resource Page](#) [2]
- [Q&A Guide to State Immigration Laws: What You Need to Know if Your State is Considering SB1070-Type Legislation](#) [3]

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