

The Immigration Fight Heads to Pennsylvania

Published on Wed, Oct 12, 2011

It appears as if Pennsylvania is the next state to enter into the fray of reforming their state's immigration laws. Last week, the State Government Committee approved the Professional Licensees Illegal Employment Act. If the bill becomes law, it would penalize anyone that hires undocumented workers by revoking their professional licenses from the Bureau of Occupational and Professional Affairs. This Bureau controls the professional licensing of over 30 licensing boards for various occupations including doctors, nurses, and funeral directors.

The Pennsylvania bill has wide support from Pennsylvania Republicans who believe that employers who hire illegal immigrants are not penalized at all. They believe that illegal immigrants are taking vital jobs in a time where the country is facing increasingly high unemployment rates. Opposition to the bill is widespread, with critics citing the bill's continued failure to set out a clear policy of how it is going to be enforced.

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Although Alabama has yet to fully enforce its draconian immigration laws, Alabama is already beginning to suffer because of its new legislation. After Judge Sharon Blackburn upheld HB 56, nearly 25% of the state's construction workers have failed to show up to work. In a time where Alabama is supposed to be focusing on rebuilding infrastructure following the Tuscaloosa tornadoes of last year, the lack of construction workers in Alabama is troublesome. The Perryman Group stated that Alabama could lose an estimated 18,000 jobs and \$2.6 billion in revenue because of the state's immigration measures. Estimates from the American Immigration Council could also cost the states another \$130 million in lost tax revenues.

Rather than looking at the lessons from one another, states continue to institute failed immigration laws. States should learn from the mistakes of one another and realize that immigration remains a federal issue. Immigration reform comes from Washington, not Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Published in the Immigration Daily

Source URL:

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