



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
March 5, 2007

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

Immigration Arrests Reflect Need for Strict Laws

In the past two years, more than 80,000 jobs have been created in the state of Missouri. It is essential we make sure those jobs are going to hardworking citizens, without putting more burdens on our small businesses. This week Missourians were reminded of the threat of illegal immigration with the arrests of 22 employees working for Sam's Janitorial Service, an Oklahoma-based company with contracts in nine state office buildings.

The workers were hired to provide cleaning services at state-owned buildings, and their arrests underscore the need to fully enforce state and federal immigration laws. The governor has responded to the discovery of illegal workers by directing all state agencies to audit their contractors, and lawmakers are examining state laws to ensure Missourians are not undermined by illegal workers.

The contractor in charge of hiring says all his workers showed him Social Security cards and immigration papers indicating their permanent residency in the United States. Company officials have not been charged, and law enforcement officials have said they don't think the company violated state laws. This goes to show that we need tough laws to prevent pervasive illegal immigration.

Sam's Janitorial Service has had contracts with the state since 1998. Authorities began investigating the company when the manager of the state's custodial operations came forth with suspicions. He had heard rumors about illegal workers and wanted to put a stop to them. After a two-month investigation that involved U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the employees were called into a meeting and detained. They have been transferred to Kansas City for processing.

Missouri holds hundreds of contracts with private companies. By going through private entities, taxpayers save millions of dollars each year. However, Missouri must remain vigilant in the fight against illegal immigration, especially when tax dollars are involved. These jobs should be going to hardworking legal workers, not lawbreakers.

My Senate colleagues and I will continue working to shore up state immigration laws to protect Missouri jobs, tax payers, and the small businesses.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

-END-