

Senator Luann Ridgeway
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Illegal Immigration Legislation Update

Missouri now has some tough new anti-illegal immigration laws on the books that are among the strongest in the country. I am very proud to say our state was not afraid to tackle this divisive issue — which has yet to receive much consideration from Washington. We have become leaders in addressing this huge and financially-crippling problem that costs American and Missouri taxpayers millions of dollars in jobs, benefits and services each year. Some of the key provisions of Missouri's ground-breaking legislation (HB 1549) include:

- Barring the state from issuing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants.
- Imposing criminal penalties for assisting illegal immigrants in obtaining driver's licenses.
- Requiring public agencies to verify legal status of applicants for welfare benefits.
- Requiring verification of legal employment status of all public employees.
- Canceling state contracts for contractors that hire illegal immigrants.
- Punishing employers who misclassify workers with penalties of \$50 per day per misclassified worker — up to a maximum of \$50,000 in fines.
- Establishing citizenship status checks on every individual presented for incarceration.
- Denying bail to illegal immigrants who are arrested (this provision came from my legislation).
- Prohibiting Missouri from creating "sanctuary cities" — a practice by some U.S. cities that sidesteps the law by adopting ordinances that ban police from asking individuals about immigration status.

As a nation of immigrants, we have a rich tradition of welcoming those who come to this country legally. However, we cannot continue to reward those who break and ignore immigration and nationality laws while failing to protect Missourians.

For more information, please visit www.senate.mo.gov/ridgeway.

What's your opinion? Email Luann.Ridgeway@senate.mo.gov.