



April 17, 2008

Senate Passes Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The Missouri Senate recently passed [SB 858](#), providing much needed immigration reform. As Missourians and Americans, we are — and always have been — a people with open arms, welcoming those who want to come to our land to improve their lives. However, to enjoy that welcome, immigrants must comply with certain legal processes to enter our country. This legislation is designed to address an ongoing insurgence of illegal aliens and should have no affect on those who enter our nation legally.

Clearly, illegal immigration is an issue more appropriately addressed by our federal Congress. Unfortunately, although I believe our federal delegation is eager to tackle the problem, they have been unable to persuade a majority of their colleagues to join them in the effort. Consequently, we must take action at the state level to address this costly and troubling issue.

Senate Bill 858 restricts access to taxpayer-funded programs or benefits intended only for those who are here legally. Illegal aliens will not be eligible for various public benefits, welfare programs or driver's licenses. Additionally, the bill bars admission to Missouri's public colleges and universities, where taxpayers subsidize tuition. Privileges funded by taxpayers should be off-limits to those who break our laws when they come here.

This bill will eliminate a major incentive for illegal immigrants to come here by barring employers from hiring illegal immigrants. Employers who hire illegal immigrants depress wages for those who are here legally. Many argue that illegal immigrants are willing to do jobs that Missourians are not willing to take. I do not buy that argument. Instead, I believe that illegal aliens, due to their unlawful status, take jobs for wages far below the wages that law abiding, taxpaying Missourians need to support themselves and their families. Missourians are hardworking people who are not above taking any job that pays a living wage. With this measure, the state will terminate any contracts with contractors who employ illegal immigrants and bar them from future state contracts. The bill also makes it a crime to knowingly employ an illegal alien. It provides simple due diligence steps that employers can take to protect themselves from such a violation. Missouri has many legal, qualified and interested people to fill these jobs. I voted to protect hard-working Missourians and their jobs.

The bill also prohibits Missouri cities from adopting policies creating so-called sanctuary cities that shield illegal immigrants from federal law enforcement. Law enforcement officials will be required to report arrested individuals to federal immigration officials if the officer has probable cause to believe the individual is here illegally.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

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