



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Reforming Illegal Immigration Policy in Missouri

It is imperative that we pass legislation that will make Missouri's stance on illegal immigration clear and institute policies that keep our state from becoming a safe-haven for illegal immigrants. This is the purpose of [Senate Bill 858](#), a bill that received first-round approval in the Senate this week.

Senate Bill 858 clarifies and institutes a series of restrictions on those in our state that are here illegally. Estimates based on the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2005 population survey suggest that there are between 35,000-65,000 unauthorized migrants living in the state of Missouri. An Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimate from 2000 found that the illegal immigrant population in our state rose 38 percent in a four-year period and 175 percent in a ten-year period. In 2007, U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement deported 8,900 illegal aliens from the six-state area of responsibility that includes Missouri. A large population of undocumented residents threatens the ability of our state to provide services and cuts job availability for Missourians.

Senate Bill 858 contains a number of provisions meant to deter illegal immigrants from choosing Missouri as their home. Some cities throughout the nation have adopted policies that would give illegal immigrants sanctuary. This legislation would prohibit municipalities within our state from adopting any such policy. Any city, town, or village that does provide sanctuary to those here illegally would not be able to receive any state grants. Other states have also considered schemes that would allow illegal immigrants to receive a driver's license. Under SB 858, illegal immigrants would be unable to obtain a driver's license from the Missouri Department of Revenue. The bill also specifies that a driver's license issued to an illegal immigrant in another state would not be valid in Missouri.

During my time in the Senate, we have worked hard to make sure that Missouri students are able to receive an affordable, quality higher education at our state's universities. Senate Bill 858 would prevent those in this country illegally from taking advantage of this valuable resource by barring illegal immigrants from attending our public universities.

The problem of illegal immigration became especially evident for our area in February, 2006 when 56 illegal aliens were arrested while working in Carthage. This legislation would specifically state that employers are barred from employing unauthorized workers. Businesses that continue to do so would be subject to the suspension of their business permits and licenses. Violators under contract with the state would have their contracts voided and be barred from contracting with the state for three years. Contractors that continue to violate the measure would be permanently barred from contracting with the state. The bill also requires employers on state contracts or using state grants, loans or tax credits to participate in a federal work authorization program to be eligible for state contracts. Public employers would also be required to participate in the program. The new laws also apply to general contractors and subcontractors and would make them potentially liable for instances of illegal hiring fraud.

Unfortunately, Washington has yet to act on the problem of illegal immigration. Missouri cannot wait, and this is why we are acting to make sure legal residents have access to jobs and services in our state. Senate Bill 858 makes sure that Missouri making comprehensive reforms to fight illegal immigration.

*Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of Newton, Jasper
and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate.*