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The Stouffer Report: *Missouri Is Two Years Ahead of Arizona*

Missouri is on the leading edge regarding laws directed at illegal immigration. Even though Arizona has been getting the attention lately, it was the Show-Me State that started the ball rolling two years ago on this issue.

For far too long, we have had to sit back and watch as the federal government has done nothing to curb the number of illegals who come into this country. Over the last four years, there has been talk of finding a solution to the challenges that Missouri faces. In 2008, we were able to come together and find an answer. There were several bills in both the House and the Senate that addressed illegal immigration that year. In the end, all of these approaches came together to form [House Bill 1549](#), which addressed several factors pertaining to illegal immigration.

House Bill 1549 requires members of the Highway Patrol to be trained in enforcing existing immigration laws. Officers now train with the federal [Department of Homeland Security](#) to further fight immigrants who are who are in our state illegally. If they arrest someone whose legal status cannot be verified through paperwork, they have 48 hours to make verification through Homeland Security. If it is then learned that the person in custody is not in the country legally, the arresting law enforcement agency must then notify Homeland Security.

In addition, so-called "sanctuary cities" are prohibited under the bill. Any city or town that tries to skirt the law and become a sanctuary city will lose any state funding until they stop this practice. Illegal aliens are also prohibited from getting public assistance or

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driver's licenses, and punishment for transporting these illegal individuals is now stricter. Now, the minimum is one year in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

This bill also addressed employers' roles in illegal immigration. Employers are now prohibited from misclassifying an employee as an independent contractor. Violations result in fines of \$50 per day, per misclassified employee. Now, employers with five or more employees have to fill out a federal 1099 miscellaneous form, with the same deadline as filing a Missouri 99 miscellaneous form. After the fifth violation, an employer is fined up to \$200 for each infringement.

House Bill 1549 clearly states knowingly employing an illegal alien will result in the suspension of a company's local licenses, permits and exemptions for 14 days. A second violation will result in suspension for a period of one year. A third or subsequent violation will result in permanent suspension.

For employers who have been awarded a state contract, hiring illegal immigrants will result in the termination of the contract and the suspension of the business entity from doing business in this state for a period of three years. A second or subsequent violation will result in the termination of the contract and the permanent suspension of the business entity from doing business in this state.

These are actions that the Missouri General Assembly took two years ago. I pray the day comes when the federal government returns to enforcing its own laws so states do not have to step in to take up the slack.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

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.

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