

IFCLA Immigration Update

Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America www.ifcla.net
438 N. Skinker Blvd. * St. Louis, MO 63130 * 314-721-2977

January 2007

MISSOURI LEGISLATION DRAWS ATTENTION

A new statewide coalition has formed in Missouri to work for justice in immigration legislation. The Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates, or MIRA, includes groups from St. Louis and Kansas City. On Monday, January 22 MIRA sponsored a briefing for thirty-seven legislators. The next day close to 100 volunteers came from Kansas City, St. Louis, Columbia, Jefferson City and Cape Girardeau to lobby for HCR 14 and SCR 6, an Anti-Discrimination Resolution (see text on p. 2) that was introduced by Senator Joan Bray and Representative John Bowman.

www.house.mo.gov/bills071/bills/hce14.htm

A press conference was well attended. Then as the volunteers were on their way home, Senators Chris Koster and Tim Green announced SB 348 which appears to be worse than a similar bill adopted in Colorado last year. SB348 creates the Missouri Omnibus Immigration Act.

Key points:

- It is illegal to employ unauthorized aliens. Every employer in the state is mandated to participate in the federal Basic Pilot Program to verify an employee's work authorization. Certificates of incorporation and other business licenses will be suspended for employing unauthorized aliens.

- It is illegal to rent any dwelling to an illegal alien, Rental licenses and occupancy permits will be denied or suspended for knowingly or recklessly renting. A process is created for verifying immigration status through the Division of Immigration Enforcement.

- Law enforcement officers must inquire into the immigration status of any individual detained for any violation unless the inquiry would significantly extend the duration of the detention. If illegal, the officer shall cooperate with any request from federal authorities regarding detention and custody transfer.

- The state shall enter into cooperative agreements with the federal government to designate state law enforcement officers to help enforce federal immigration law.

- Illegal aliens are barred from attending all public universities in the state and shall not receive any type of public assistance or benefit.

- The act also authorizes cities, villages, and towns to enact ordinance prohibiting the employment of unauthorized aliens or unlawful workers and may deny business licenses to employers who employ unlawful workers.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

EXPRESS YOUR CONCERNS!!

CALL THE SENATORS:

Chris Koster (R)
Senate District 31
573-751-1430

Tim Green (D)
Senate District 13
573-751-2420

**CONTACT YOUR SENATOR
AND REPRESENTATIVES**

ASK THEM:

**1. TO SUPPORT HCR 14 and
SCR 6**

**2. NOT TO SUPPORT SB 348
AND SB 178 AND SB180**

*To identify your rep/senator go
to www.house.mo.gov and
enter your 9 digit zip code*

House Concurrent Resolution No. 14: 94th General Assembly

Whereas, we affirm the inherent dignity of all people, regardless of color, religion, or immigration status, and we expect equality and justice for all; and

Whereas, hard working, tax paying immigrants embody our Missouri values of hard work, faith, and family and come to establish roots in Missouri communities in search of the American Dream; and

Whereas, we reject the extremism of anti-immigrant groups that seek to use fear to confuse and divide our communities; and

Whereas, we support the right of all Missourians to express their opinions about the best course for our

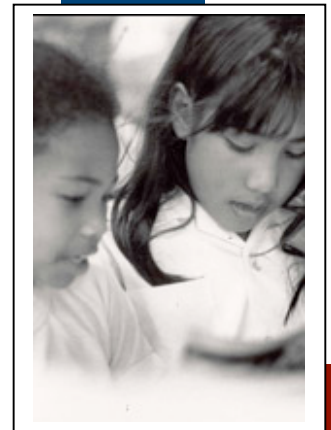
nation's immigration laws and commit ourselves to advancing a civil, respectful, and humane dialogue on the same; and

Whereas, we recognize the connections between many anti-immigrant groups and white nationalist organizations and disavow their message of racial hatred; and

Whereas, we acknowledge the proud history of our state and our nation as a country of immigrants and believe that immigrants continue to be an important part of our heritage and prosperity:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the members of the Missouri House of Representatives, Ninety-Fourth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, hereby call for a unified voice against anti-immigrant groups and their organized bigotry and dangerous vigilantism and continue working together in coalition with immigrant, labor, community, business, and religious groups to promote a welcoming Missouri and protecting the civil and human rights of Missouri's immigrant families while calling on Congress to address our nations' broken immigration system in a comprehensive fashion.

"We affirm the dignity of all people, regardless of color, religion, or immigration status."



www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Dispelling the Myths

- **Immigrants don't pay taxes:** they pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Also, the "suspend" file (taxes paid which don't match ss#) grew by \$20 billion between 1990 and 1998
- **Immigrants are a drain on the economy:** 70% arrive at prime working age, pay \$550 billion into the SS system, start their own businesses, The net benefit of immigration to the U.S. is nearly \$10 billion annually.
- **Immigrants take jobs from citizens:** the work force is getting older, fertility rates are lower...actually, we need workers.
- **Immigrants don't learn English:** within 10 years 75% speak English well.
- **Immigrants come to take welfare:** undocumented persons are not eligible for benefits and must wait five years if they have a green card; any help they might receive does not equal taxes paid.



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www.jps-stl.org*

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.ifcla.net

The Federal Solution: When Will It Come?

Insufficient legal avenues for immigrants to enter the U.S., compared with the number of jobs in need of workers, has significantly contributed to the current conundrum.

At the same time, we must realize that people

don't leave home unless they cannot stay. Studies are revealing that NAFTA and other free trade agreements have forced people to migrate. Wages have dropped 22%, prices for corn have fallen 70%, 81% of rural people live in poverty.

The Senate will probably present a new bill for immigration reform in February.

One can follow the work of Congress at:

thomas.loc.gov

IMMIGRATION PANEL

When:

February 8, 2007
4-6:00 pm

What:

Immigration Panel:
Catholic Social Teaching & US Immigration Policy:
Church at the Border

Where:

St. Louis University
Cook Hall
AB Auditorium
(Spring/Lindell)

Who:

Fr. John Stowe and Iliana Holguin, an immigration attorney and executive director for Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services in El Paso, TX.

Sponsors: Center for International Studies and the Department of Theological Studies...

Inform Yourself

Deepa Fernandes, journalist and author of the new book, *Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration* about problems with **current guestworker programs**. (She quotes an African American leader in New Orleans, where many temporary Latino immigrant workers are reconstructing the city, who calls guestworker programs "**the new slavery**.")
www.farmworkerjustice.org

"Immigration/Labor" section of Farmworker Justice website, --explains the difference between the positive **AgJOBS** and the problems with **guestworker programs**.

An article titled, "Transient Servitude: The U.S. Guest Worker Program for Exploiting Mexican and Central American Workers" **in the new issue of Monthly Review**.

BE ACTIVE ON THE ISSUES

Volunteer at Kabat House:
314-621-7099
(hospitality for immigrants)

Translate for St. Louis Tax Assistance Program:
www.stlouistap.org
tedbushur@yahoo.com
St. Mary's High School
4701 S. Grand
Saturday mornings in January and February starting at 8:30am

Invite a speaker to show a power point presentation on the issues prepared for the Jefferson City briefing.
Contact Joan Suarez of MIRA
suarez.joan@att.net