



# PENNSYLVANIA IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP COALITION

*Advocating for refugees, migrants, and immigrants in Pennsylvania*

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## The Case Against Making Police Act as Immigration Agents

*Pennsylvania Senate Bills 515 and 891 and House Bills 738, 798, 799 and 801 and mimic Arizona SB 1070, requiring local law enforcement officials to enforce federal immigration laws. Local and state police would have to enter into an agreement with the federal government to screen the immigration status of people they stop or arrest and report it to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).*

**IMPACT: Reduction in public safety caused by immigrants being afraid to report crime – either as victims or witnesses; high resource demands of millions of dollars and extensive training of police; diversion of police from their primary mission of public safety; risk of causing racial profiling; expensive lawsuits**

### **Public Safety is Jeopardized, Not Enhanced, Because of the Chilling Effects on Reporting Criminal Activity**

- Many local authorities have worked hard to build trust and confidence with immigrant residents, this would undo all of that work.
- Immigrants would be less likely to come forward as witnesses or as victims to report criminal activity for fear of deportation.
- As a result of this silence, our neighborhoods would be *less* safe for everyone.
- Law enforcement officials across the country stated in a recent report by the Police Executive Research Forum that they do not want to be involved in immigration enforcement, because they know this will erode their relationships with immigrant communities and make them less able to keep people safe.<sup>1</sup>

### **State and Local Police Do Not Have the Resources to Enforce Federal Immigration Laws**

- Utah's Legislative Fiscal Analysts Office recently estimated an SB 1070 copycat bill in their state would cost **\$11 million** to implement. Kentucky's State Legislature estimated the cost of a similar proposal at **\$89 million** per year – including increase prison, court, and foster care fees.<sup>2</sup>
- Many state and local police departments are already stretched for time and resources. Other community safety priorities would be sidelined in order to enforce immigration law.

### **Civil Rights of People of Color Would be Threatened & Lawsuits Could Result**

- You cannot tell simply by looking whether a person is undocumented or not. Innocent immigrants and citizens would likely be harassed, detained, and threatened with deportation.
- Such laws encourage racial profiling, leading to a greater number of civil rights violations. Such bills have consistently left states and local governments vulnerable to time consuming and costly lawsuits.
- Here in Pennsylvania, the city of Hazleton has already spent \$2.8 million defending its anti-immigrant ordinance.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Preston, Julia. "Police Chiefs Wary of Immigration Role." *The New York Times*. March 3, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Raghunathan, Suman. "Midway Through Session, Anti-Immigrant Bills Continue to Fail Nationwide." Progressive States Network. March 3, 2011. <<http://progressivestates.org/node/26382>>

<sup>3</sup> Martinez, Gebe. "Unconstitutional and Costly: The High Price of Local Immigration Enforcement." Center for American Progress. January 24, 2011. <[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/unconstitutional\\_and\\_costly.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/unconstitutional_and_costly.html)>