



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on June 3, 2010

Condemnation of Arizona Laws to be Taught to L.A. Students

The Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District voted unanimously Tuesday to express "outrage" and "condemnation" of Arizona's new law on illegal immigration and another law that prohibits the teaching of "ethnic solidarity" in Arizona schools. The L.A. board instructed Superintendent of Schools Ramon Cortines to ensure that students are taught about Arizona laws "in the context of the American values of unity, diversity, and equal protection for all."



Some board members said the laws have already become a hot topic of classroom discussions in the district, where about 73 percent of the students are Latino. About a third are learning English, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

"There's a conversation in this country around the rights of people, and students are a part of it," said school board president Monica Garcia.

"Our students are dramatically affected by this," board member Steve Zimmer said. "It has caused a great deal of stress, uncertainty, questions that are brought in to the classroom every day." The resolution also directed the superintendent to recommend steps to "curtail any economic support" of Arizona in the form of district-sponsored employee travel or contracts with firms based in Arizona. Other school districts have taken steps to boycott the state. The Denver Public Schools and the San Diego Unified School District, for example, have both barred employees from attending work-related conferences in Arizona.

The controversial Arizona immigration law makes it a state crime to be in the country illegally and requires law enforcement officials, when stopping someone relative to a crime or infraction, to question and detain the individual when there is "reasonable suspicion" the person is in the country illegally. It also makes it a state crime for immigrants to be without the documentation required by federal law.

The law forbids stopping people on the basis of race or ethnicity, but it has nonetheless drawn the wrath of opponents who claim it will result in racial profiling. The school board resolution says the Arizona law "effectively sanctions and promotes unconstitutional racial profiling and harassment, and blatantly violates the civil rights of both Arizona residents and all visitors to the state."

"It's very important for us to take a position of outrage," said board member Yolie Flores. "Because of the color of your skin and the accent you speak with, you will be targeted. You will be asked if you belong here.... Taking a position against that kind of racism is appropriate."

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The other Arizona law targeted by the L.A. school board is one that bans classes that promote the overthrow of the government, promote "resentment toward a race or class of people," or are designed "primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group." The law, scheduled to go into effect next year, forbids classes or school policies that "advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals." The law, said the Los Angeles school board, will "severely restrict the education of all children in Arizona by refusing to incorporate vital sections of history that incorporate the contributions of this country's many diverse groups."

In an e-mail to FoxNews.com, school district spokesman Robert Alaniz said the board directed the superintendent to ensure the Arizona laws are discussed in civic and history classes in the context of other events in American history including slavery, Jim Crowe segregation laws, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and incidents of anti-Semitism.

"This resolution highlights our commitment to ensuring that our students understand the ideals and constitutional rights that this great country is founded on, while also gaining an appreciation of the histories and cultural contributions of those who have helped build this nation," Flores said.

But the board's actions have some area residents wondering why their local school board is busying itself with outrage and condemnation over Arizona laws. Los Angeles County Republican Chairman Jane Barnett told FoxNews.com that she has been inundated with phone calls and e-mails from people in Los Angeles saying the board has no business meddling in the laws of another state when it has problems of its own to solve.

"This is ridiculous, it's ridiculous for us to be involved in Arizona law," said Barnett. "There is a 50 percent dropout rate in some parts of the school district — is this going to keep kids in school?"

"This is just another example of these embedded bureaucrats in California doing anything they can to deflect and distract from the poor job their doing of educating our children," said Nathan Mintz, the founder of the South Bay Tea Party and the Republican nominee for the 53rd State Assembly seat. Barnett said Los Angeles County Republicans are among those who take a different view of the Arizona laws than the one prescribed by the school board.

"We support Arizona," she said. "In fact, I think we ought to go there right now for vacation."

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