



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 10, 2011

Alabama Gov Signs Immigration Bill; Leftists Outraged

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley signed the state's tough immigration law on Thursday, inviting an immediate challenge from the radical left, including the American Civil Liberties Union and Southern Poverty Law Center.

Top GOP legislators say the bill is required to stem the tide of illegal aliens who are costing the state hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The politically-correct lobby labels the bill as hateful and racist.

Like Arizona, which passed a tough immigration law two years ago, Alabama is likely in for a costly legal battle that will go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court if the state is willing to defend its prerogatives.

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What the Bill Does

Sponsored by Sen. [Scott Beason](#) and Rep. [Micky Hammon](#) (picture, above), [HB 56](#) is an omnibus measure that contemplates almost every conceivable problem illegals cause.

[Said Gov. Bentley](#), "We have a real problem with illegal immigration in this country. I campaigned for the toughest immigration laws, and I'm proud of the Legislature for working tirelessly to create the strongest immigration bill in the country."

As [The New American reported](#) earlier this week, it requires the state's Attorney General to negotiate a memorandum of understanding about immigration law between Alabama and the Justice or Homeland Security departments, and voters who show up at the polling stations must prove they are citizens. The bill requires local governments and officials to help enforce federal or state immigration laws by notifying federal authorities when criminal illegals are in custody, and it conversely forbids state and local officials from refusing to cooperate in the enforcement of state and federal immigration. That will prevent localities in the state from voting to become [sanctuaries](#) for illegals.

As well, the bill [cuts off](#) welfare benefits for illegals, and while it prohibits illegals from using residency to receive education benefits, it does not cut off access to the public schools for children. However, schools must determine immigration status of suspect children. HB 56 requires employers to enroll in the federal [E-verify](#) program to determine the eligibility of an employee to work. The bill also prohibits illegals from seeking employment in the state. Importantly, the bill punishes those who harbor or transport illegals. Employers may not, for instance, pick up illegals and transport them to work.

The bill's most controversial provision, naturally, mirrors the codicil that invited a leftist federal judge [to invalidate](#) a democratically passed bill in Arizona. Once the Governor signs, Alabama police will be required to check the immigration status of anyone arrested for a crime requiring bail. Police will be permitted to detain those they believe, with "reasonable suspicion," are illegals.



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Cosponsor Hammon [told *The Montgomery Advertiser*](#) that the bill will "prevent Alabama from becoming a sanctuary state. This will help us rein in finances in the state," he said. "It will create jobs for American workers and legal immigrants."

Not least of Alabama's worries is the cost of illegal immigration, some \$298 million, the [Federation for American Immigration Reform reports](#).

Leftists on the Rampage

Unsurprisingly, the bill sent leftists into an indignant rage. They aver that the measure usurps federal authority in immigration matters, and that schools should not inquire after the citizenship status of students or their parents. The state's version of the SPLC, [Alabama Appleseed](#), said the bill will intimidate the parents and, as the [Advertiser reported](#), "effectively bar" children from school.

"Just by virtue of trying to collect the data, it will have a chilling effect through harassment and fear," Shay Farley, the group's legal director told the paper.

The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) is beside itself that Americans have decided the borders must be closed and illegals stopped from entering the state.

SPLC's legal honcho, [the paper reported](#), said the bill won't become law and that it was, of course, racist. "I think it sends a pretty profoundly disturbing message," [she told](#) the paper. "It has provisions that have been enjoined in other states. It's mean-spirited. It's racist. It's divisive. It's just a disaster."

The SPLC's [website claims](#) the law "sacrifices citizens' safety [and] perpetuates bigotry."

This ill-advised bill undermines our core American values of fairness and equality. By perpetuating the hate rhetoric that has become commonplace among many elected officials, this bill threatens the rights of citizens and non-citizens alike. H.B. 56 attacks workers trying to make a better life for their families, divides communities, and places Alabama, once again, on the wrong side of history.

The ACLU promises to sue, [the *New York Times* reported](#) earlier this week:

"This bill invites discrimination into every aspect of the lives of people in Alabama," said Cecillia Wang, director of the immigrants' rights project of the American Civil Liberties Union, which has brought legal challenges against several state immigration-control laws. Calling Alabama's bill "outrageous and blatantly unconstitutional," Ms. Wang said, "We will take action if the governor signs it."

The state ACLU [flatly called](#) the measure a "racial-profiling" bill. Explained one of the group's top legal torpedos:

Immigration status is not something you can accurately determine based on a brief observation or interaction, but this law pretends otherwise. It invites profiling on the basis of race, ethnicity, and language. Subjecting people to harassment, investigation and arrest because they are perceived to be foreign is contrary to who we are as Americans.

Hammon thinks the bill can pass muster, the *Advertiser* reported. "We have made it a point to make sure our language mirrors the federal government's language," he told the paper. "We are assisting the



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federal government with this subject matter. We're not taking that away."

And he explained the bill succinctly to the *Times* when it passed:

"This is a jobs-creation bill for Americans," said Representative Micky Hammon, a Republican who was a chief sponsor of the bill. "We really want to prevent illegal immigrants from coming to Alabama and to prevent those who are here from putting down roots," he said.

A Nationwide Movement

Alabama isn't the only state cracking down on illegals. [According to the National Conference of State Legislatures](#), thousands of such bills are under consideration across all 50 states.

"In the first quarter of 2011," NCSL reports, "state legislators in the 50 states and Puerto Rico introduced 1,538 bills and resolutions relating to immigrants and refugees. This number surpasses the first quarter of 2010, when 1,180 bills were introduced."

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