



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 16, 2011

Arizona Bill Would Require Hospitals To Check Patients' Immigration Status

Conservative lawmakers in Arizona have fired another salvo in the battle against illegal immigration. Legislation pending before a committee in the Arizona Senate would require hospitals to determine the immigration status of patients.

On Tuesday, the sponsor of [SB 1405](#), Sen. [Steve Smith](#), pulled the bill from the committee's calendar because it would not have passed, [reported the Arizona Republic](#). The bill requires proof of citizenship for non-emergency admission to a hospital in the state. [It comprises](#) four mandates:



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1. Requir[ing] the admissions officer of a hospital, before admitting a person for nonemergency care, to confirm the person is a citizen, a legal resident of or lawfully present in the United States....
2. Authoriz[ing] the admissions officer to use any of the [listed] methods to verify citizenship or legal status.
3. Requir[ing] the admissions officer to contact the local federal immigration office if the person does not meet citizenship or legal status requirements.
4. Requir[ing] the admissions officer, if a hospital provides emergency care to a person who does not meet citizenship or legal status requirements, to contact the local federal immigration office upon the patient's successful treatment.

[It permits](#) any one of 11 methods to determine the citizenship of a patient. It would allow hospitals to treat emergency cases.

Unsurprisingly, liberals were apoplectic, alleging that the bill would turn doctors and hospitals into de facto agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. One Democrat trashed the bill on her Facebook page: "The bill placed burden on hospitals to act as immigration agents," [wrote Sen. Kyrsten Sinema](#). "Let them do their work!"

At a press conference about the bill, Democrat Sen. [Steve Gallardo complained](#) that Republicans are "turning medical professionals into full-time INS agents. Doctors that should be working to help treat ill patients are now turning into ICE agents."

[According to The Associated Press](#), a retired doctor who favors socialized medicine claimed the bill was turning Arizona into a police state. "Do we want to stop sick people from coming in for health care?" he asked.

Conservatives introduced the bill to help control the costs caused by the [tsunami of illegal immigration](#)



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that has washed over the state, which is drowning it financially. Arizonans, the Federation for American Immigration Reform reported, [cough up](#) some \$2.5 billion annually for welfare, schooling, health care and prison time for illegal aliens. Health-care costs for illegals in Arizona [have reached](#) \$320 million annually.

[State Sen. Russell Pearce](#) was the impetus behind Arizona's law [that would](#) require police to check the immigration status of anyone they arrest or otherwise contact if they have reasonable suspicion the person is an illegal alien.

The Obama administration sued [to stop](#) that law from taking effect, and a federal judge agreed with the administration that the law was unconstitutional because it interfered with and usurped the federal government's authority to enforce immigration laws. The judge also worried that legal resident aliens would be wrongfully arrested.

Last week, [Arizona countersued](#), arguing that the federal government had abdicated its duty to protect the state from invasion, that the Secretary of Homeland Security was not discharging her duty to build a security fence on Arizona's border, and that the law trespassed on Arizona's sovereign right, under the Tenth Amendment, to enforce its laws.

That is what Pearce is trying to do, as [he stated](#) very clearly: "It's a felony to [aid and] abet. We're going to enforce the law without apology."



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