



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on June 11, 2010

Arizona Illegals Already Appear to be Exiting

Although the new Arizona Senate Bill 1070 has about seven weeks remaining before going into effect, it seems to be having an impact ahead of schedule. With student enrollment dropping in some areas and Hispanic businesses slowing down, it appears evident that the bill's sponsor, GOP State Sen. Russell Pearce of Mesa, is already achieving the goal he and other supporters had in mind.



A spokesman for Gov. Jan Brewer, Paul Senseman, said he has heard reports of people leaving the state. Saying it was difficult as yet to be exact about numbers, he added, "If that means that fewer people are breaking the law, that is absolutely an accomplishment."

With comments on the bill's business impact, a recent [USA Today](#) article also quoted the sentiments of a few illegal immigrants on the upcoming law:

Businesses serving the Hispanic community say business is down, signaling that illegal immigrants are holding on to cash in anticipation of a move from the state, said David Castillo, co-founder of the Latin Association of Arizona, a chamber of commerce for nearly 400 first-generation Hispanic business owners.

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"(Brewer) signed the law, and everything fell apart," Castillo said. "It's devastating."

Jorge Vargas plans to move to New York City because his air-conditioning business relies mostly on Hispanics. "My business is completely dead," he said.

Juan Carlos Cruz, an illegal immigrant who has worked in plant nurseries for 20 years, huddled with dozens of relatives over the Memorial Day Weekend in the backyard of his brother's Phoenix-area home to plot out the family's next move to avoid what they say will be harassment by police. Virginia and California are the front-runners.

"If I were alone, I'd try to stay. But I have a family, and I have to find a place where we can live with more freedom," said Cruz, who hopes to move July 4 to blend in with holiday weekend traffic. "This is getting too hard."

Officials in Tucson and Phoenix cannot yet substantiate any numbers regarding an "illegal exodus." The school district of Alhambra nevertheless anticipates between 200 and 300 students leaving on account of the bill. A spokeswoman for the Arizona Dept. of Education, Amy Rezzonico, said it would be late October when schools must send in their enrollment numbers, giving them sure statistics.

According to Jeffrey Smith, Baisz Elementary School District superintendent, his school system has had



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95 mostly Hispanic students leave since late April when the bill was signed. He added that many of the parents involved claimed concern for the new law as the reason for their departure. The enrollment dropped from 2,773 to 2,678. In 2007, Arizona passed a law that further penalized businesses for hiring illegals, and 100,000 immigrants consequently left the state.

An article on [FoxNews.com](#) continued:

Smith suggested the immigrant flight from Arizona could be even more significant this time around, since the new law's provisions are broad and could drive entire families to leave the state. Smith said he's hearing secondhand that the families are going to New Mexico.

"The statement is something like New Mexico is the way Arizona used to be," he said. "I heard one lady say she might go back to Mexico."

The law makes illegal immigration a crime in Arizona. It will also require local law enforcement, in the course of dealing with those detained for motor vehicle violations or other legal infractions, to check the residency status of those they feel might be illegally there. The officers are then compelled to turn the illegal immigrants over to federal custody.

The Fox News.com article also stated:

Though the country's top immigration enforcement official earlier threatened not to process some of those immigrants, he said Thursday that Immigration and Customs Enforcement would continue to accept referrals from Arizona. John Morton said the decision would be made "on a case-by-case basis in light of our resources and in light of our priorities."

Arizona officials who have supported the law remain determined to enforce it.

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