



Border Action Network

Building the Voice for Human Rights on the Arizona-Mexico Border

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Immigration Policy Cutting State's Economic Throat?

Phoenix, AZ – Immigrant rights advocates came to the Arizona capitol Tuesday, asking lawmakers for immigration policies that build up communities instead of tearing them down. Jennifer Allen, director of the Tucson-based Border Action Network, says the legislature needs to consider immigration in terms of the economy.

"They should be thinking long-term about economic health and economic stability. The key ingredients are workers and the protections of workers' rights."

Allen calls immigrants vital to Arizona's economic future. The state's lawmakers have passed some of the nation's toughest immigration laws, arguing that they must act because the federal government has failed to secure the nation's borders.

Maurice Goldman, Arizona chair of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, points out that immigrant consumers spend billions of dollars every year at Arizona businesses.

"A research study conducted by the University of Arizona found that the net 2004 fiscal impact of immigrants in the state of Arizona was a positive \$940 million."

Alessandra Soler-Meetze, director of ACLU-Arizona says the state's public policies have promoted hostility toward all immigrants, legal or not.

"We have relied on punitive measures that have targeted not just recent immigrants, but long-time legal residents and even U.S. citizens, simply because of the color of their skin."

Border Action Network's Allen urges Congress to move ahead on immigration reform, but says action is also needed at the state level.

"We're seeing other states take some leadership around discussing and approving legislation that would provide in-state tuition to undocumented students, because that's the future workforce. Those are future business leaders. Those are people who can help our state and communities grow."

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