

## **American Immigration Council Applauds DOJ for Responding to Alabama's Punitive Anti-Immigrant Law**

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**Washington, D.C.** – On Monday, the Department of Justice [filed suit](#) [1] against the state of Alabama to block the implementation of HB 56, which is set to take effect September 1. HB 56 is similar to but far more punitive than Arizona's SB 1070. The law includes provisions that require local school districts to check and report on the immigration status of all children enrolling in public schools. It also transforms local police into federal immigration officers, and creates criminal consequences for anyone who provides housing, transportation, or employment to undocumented immigrants.

Alabama is the second state, after Arizona, that the Department of Justice has sued for overstepping its authority to regulate immigration. Lawsuits have also been filed in Utah, Indiana and Georgia by immigrant rights and civil liberties groups. So far, the courts have prevented each state from implementing the central provisions of their anti-immigrant laws. In truth, all these laws have done is inflict long-lasting damage to these states' reputations, businesses, and budgets.

The Department of Justice has taken the right step to not only preserve the federal government's exclusive authority to regulate immigration, but to take a stand against laws that will result in profiling, discrimination and the violation of fundamental constitutional rights. States must not continue down this dangerous and punitive path. The [debate](#) [2] surrounding the enactment of HB 56 was reminiscent of a darker time in our nation's history—one that we must not revisit. Furthermore, as noted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, HB 56, like Arizona's SB 1070, will overload the federal government with referrals and divert ICE's scarce resources from the agency's highest priorities—national security, public safety, and border control. Alabama's draconian law will also discourage immigrant parents from enrolling their children in public schools, according to a high-level official from the U.S. Department of Education.

"Other states considering copycat laws should be forewarned," said Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council. "The federal government and civil society will not stand by while states create a hostile environment for immigrants and their communities throughout our nation. The impact of these laws will not be endured by undocumented immigrants alone. They are a threat to the civil rights and civil liberties of all residents of Alabama. Abandoning the values and principles on which this country was built is not the answer to our ongoing immigration problems. We must demand that our federal government end its filibuster on immigration reform efforts and get to work doing job of fixing our immigration system."

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### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i2WRcGw12Tkmr6vYKTwxljR7n-lg?docId=3>

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[2] <http://enewscourier.com/local/x1424062855/Brooks-has-strong-words-on-immigration-law>

[3] <mailto:shoy@immcouncil.org>

[4] [http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/docs/DOJ\\_Lawsuit\\_Against\\_Arizona\\_080211.pdf](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/docs/DOJ_Lawsuit_Against_Arizona_080211.pdf)