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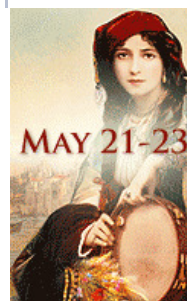
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US INDIAN NEWS

Civil Rights Groups Condemn New Ariz. Immigration Law

By SUNITA SOHRABJI
indiawest.com

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Several civil rights organizations have condemned a new Arizona law targeting undocumented immigrants, the nation's harshest such measure to date.

Arizona Governor Jan Brewer April 23 signed into law SB 1070, which makes it a crime to be in the country illegally. Under the new law, police and other local authorities can demand proof of immigration from anyone they suspect of being undocumented. Failure to provide proof could result in arrests and jail sentences for up to six months, with a fine of \$2,500.



Pro-immigrant marches and rallies will be held across the country May 1; local march sites can be found online at <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org>.

The Washington, D.C.-based organization South Asian Americans Leading Together immediately condemned the enactment of the new law.

Indians are the fastest-growing group of undocumented immigrants, noted a recent report from the Department of Homeland Security. Though they currently make up less than two percent of the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S., their numbers have increased 125 percent over the past eight years, noted the DHS report.

There are currently more than 275,000 undocumented Indians in the U.S., estimated the DHS, noting that most have overstayed an employment or visitor's visa.

Over the next three years, Indians will become the third-largest number of undocumented immigrants, predicted the DHS report, released last year.

"SAALT opposes this policy as it will undoubtedly lead to profiling of communities of color, regardless of immigration status," said Deepa Iyer, executive director of the organization, in a press statement.

"Profiling results in community members being viewed with suspicion by not only law enforcement but also the general public, and does little but fuel discrimination," said Iyer.

"This law places all minorities, including Asian Pacific Americans, under constant suspicion, relegating them to second-class status," said Stewart Kwoh, president and executive director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center. "Such broad immigration enforcement powers are not only unconstitutional, but will undermine community trust in law enforcement," he said.

"Arizona's decision legalizes racial profiling by law enforcement and moves our entire country in the wrong direction," said Titi Liu, executive director of the Asian Law Caucus.

Supporters of the measure say the new law specifically prohibits the use of race or nationality as the sole basis for an immigration check, and Brewer has ordered training for law enforcement officials as to what constitutes reasonable suspicion.

President Barack Obama has called the new law misguided and has asked the Justice Department to examine its legality. At an April 27 town hall meeting in Ottumwa, Iowa, Obama stated that the new law was "poorly conceived."

"You can try to make it really tough on people who look like they, quote, unquote look like

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illegal immigrants," he said, responding to a question about undocumented workers. "Local officials are allowed to ask somebody who they have a suspicion might be an illegal immigrant for their papers; if you are a Hispanic American in Arizona, your great, great grandparents may have been there before Arizona was even a state."

"But now suddenly if you don't have your papers and you took your kid out to get ice cream, you're going to be harassed, that's something that could potentially happen," said Obama.

Iyer said the new law underscored the need for comprehensive immigration reform and anti-profiling policies.

SAALT has called on the community to write to Brewer condemning the new measure — azgov@az.gov — and to Obama and members of Congress to support immigration reform.

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