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S.B. 1070: A More than “misguided” Approach to Immigration Reform

Milwaukee, April 29, 2010: Last week, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed one of the most controversial anti-illegal immigration laws in the country. Senate Bill 1070, The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, allows local law enforcement agencies, as well as federal immigration law enforcement, to interrogate and even detain people based on “reasonable suspicion” that they are unlawfully present in the United States. According to Jerry Grzeca, Founding and Managing Partner of Grzeca Law Group, S.C. located in downtown Milwaukee, “If you look or sound foreign, there is a strong possibility that you will face consistent harassment by police to confirm your citizenship.”

President Obama, who advocates for immigration reform, commented on S.B. 1070, calling the bill “misguided.” Democratic and Republican opponents alike take issue with the ambiguity of the bill’s language. S.B. 1070’s broad instruction to police is that when there is “reasonable suspicion” that a person is unlawfully present in the U.S., a “reasonable attempt shall be made, when practicable” to check for documents, but the bill does not clearly define “reasonable suspicion.” The vagueness of the bill’s language leaves much room according to Grzeca for racial profiling: “What other variables can be considered other than the color of a person’s skin or the language they speak to suspect a person may be in the country without proper documentation. This is racial profiling.”

S.B. 1070 mandates that all individuals in Arizona carry papers, which means that even U.S. citizens can be subject to this harassment. Grzeca explains: “American citizens will no longer be able to enjoy the freedoms we all take for granted. Even a simple trip to the park or the grocery store cannot be done without carrying documentation of legal status. Failure to have the proper papers could lead to detainment until the individual’s information is verified. The enforcement of S.B. 1070 means that even if you are a U.S. citizen, you still might be harassed. Gestapo tactics should be feared under any circumstance in our free democracy.”

Proponents of the bill claim that the reason for the new law is that people in southern AZ are fed up with the drug smugglers, traffickers and gangs who are flooding through the border. But, this law does nothing to address these issues. Contrary to opponents' fears that immigration is increasing our country's crime rates, a fact sheet issued by The Immigration Policy Center shows a decrease in Arizona crime rates over time; this publication indicates that states with high immigration have the lowest crime rates and that unauthorized immigration is not associated with higher crime rates.

According to Grzeca, "The President's declaration that this legislation is "misguided" is quite the understatement. S.B. 1070 is not the answer to immigration reform. What we need is legislation that brings the nation's undocumented workforce out of the shadows and this bill will only push illegal aliens further into the darkest corners of our nation."

Grzeca Law Group, S.C. (GLG) is an AV-rated, full-service immigration law firm dedicated to providing superior professional service. GLG represents corporate clients on employment-based immigration matters as well as individuals and families to help meet their specific family-based immigration needs. For more information please visit www.grzecalaw.com.

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