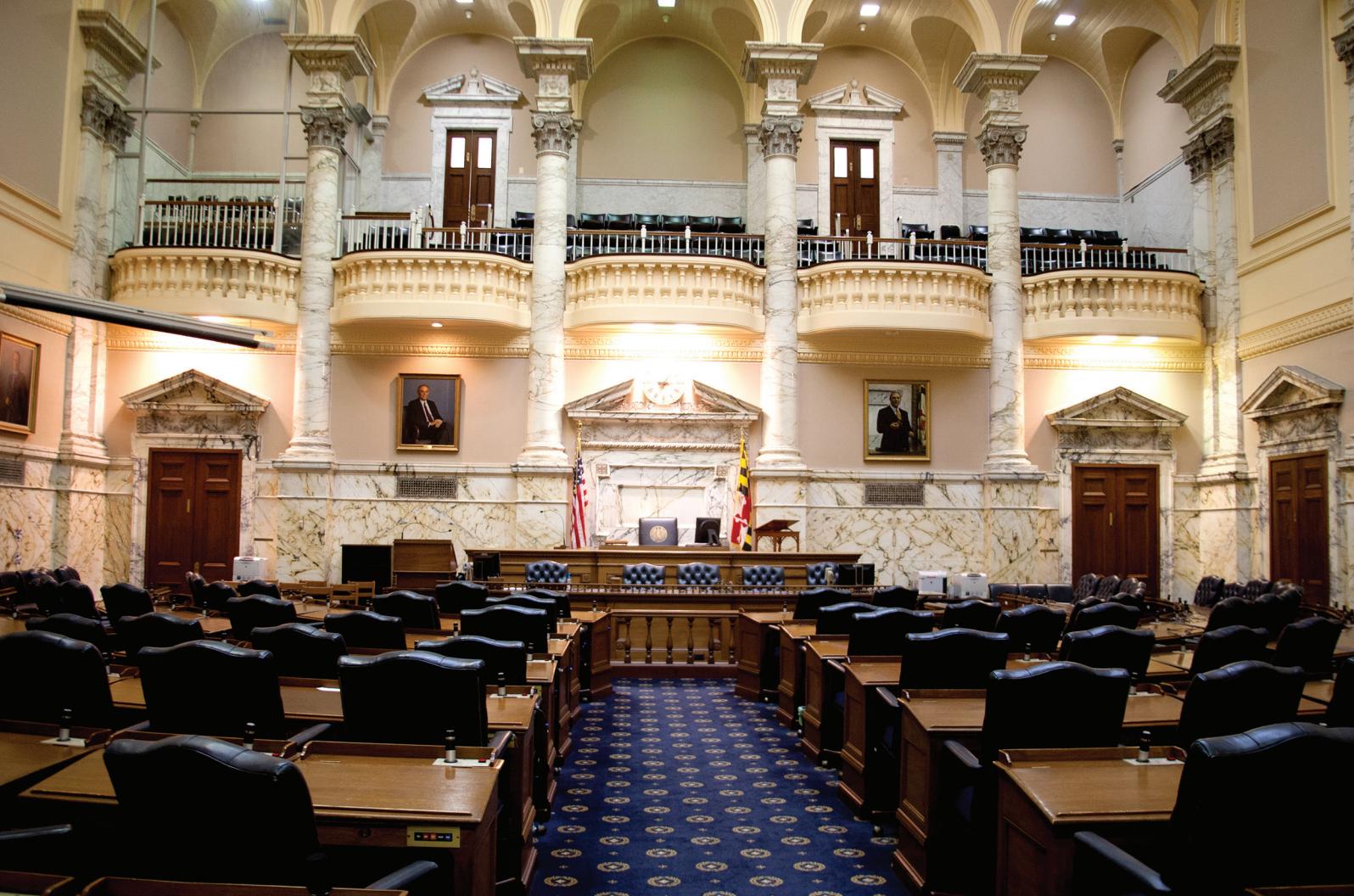




The Role of State and Local Governments in Immigration Enforcement

A State and Local Legislative Agenda
from the Federation for American
Immigration Reform





INTRODUCTION

With few prospects for true immigration reform at the federal level, FAIR believes that action by state and local governments is key to upholding the integrity of our nation's immigration laws. To be sure, action by Congress to address weaknesses in our immigration system—both by the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate—has been fundamentally absent for years. Barring the exception of a few key leaders, any talk of the impact of illegal immigration and unchecked legal immigration on jobs, public safety, or national security is nil in the halls of Congress. Rather, **each year it seems that the same players continue to push the same tired amnesty legislation, while the vast majority of Americans light up the Congressional switchboard to voice their opposition.**

Such shortcomings by the legislative branch, however, pale in comparison to the outright proactive dismantling of enforcement by the executive branch. Interior enforcement of federal immigration laws is now almost non-existent. Since 2009, the Obama administration has enforced the laws as it wishes they were, not as the laws actually are or were intended to be, thus guaranteeing that most of the 12 million illegal aliens residing in the U.S. will never face deportation. **This is creating a powerful incentive for millions more to enter.**

Additionally, President Obama's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has enacted amnesty by executive fiat, allowing millions of illegal aliens to enjoy immunity from the law and obtain affirmative benefits such as work permits, all under the guise of so-

called “prosecutorial discretion.” The Obama administration has also permitted hundreds of thousands of unaccompanied minors and families to freely cross the border while facilitating their transportation to illegal alien relatives in the U.S. at taxpayer expense. Finally, the administration has endangered America’s national security through its insistence on importing thousands of Syrian refugees whom the President’s own chief intelligence officers admit cannot be properly vetted.

The consequences of this calamitous mix of Congressional inaction and executive fiat on immigration are most acutely felt by the state and local governments. In 2010, FAIR examined the cost of illegal immigration on U.S. taxpayers, and in particular, to the individual states. FAIR concluded that illegal immigration costs taxpayers approximately \$113 billion each year. **A substantial majority of that annual price tag—an astounding \$84**



billion—is paid for by state and local governments, while the federal burden is less than \$29 billion. FAIR’s study examined the fiscal impact of illegal immigration in several key areas, including the cost of education, health care, justice and law enforcement, public assistance, and general government services. Of all the categories, education for the children of illegal aliens constitutes the single largest cost to taxpayers, at an

annual price tag of nearly \$52 billion. Nearly all of those costs are absorbed by state and local governments.

So, with Congress in a stalemate, and President Obama doing everything within (and outside) of his power to proactively dismantle enforcement of our nation’s immigration laws, what hope do struggling state and local governments have?

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THE ROLE OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Despite efforts by the amnesty lobby to shutdown debate and action on immigration at the state and local level, **there IS an important role for state and local law and policymakers to play in the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws.** Evidence of Congress' vision for state and local cooperation in the enforcement of immigration laws is found in several places in federal law. For instance, Section 1373 of Title 8 of the U.S. Code prohibits governments at all levels from restricting the reporting of immigration status information. That section reads, "Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal,

State, or local law, a Federal, State, or local government entity or official may not prohibit, or in any way restrict, any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, the [DHS] information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual." That same section goes on to further prohibit the restriction of federal, state, and local governments from sending or requesting immigration status information to DHS, maintaining immigration status information, or otherwise exchanging such information with other governmental entities. As such, Congress intended a free flow of information between all levels of government when it comes to immigration status.

Additionally, Congress created the 287(g) program, whereby the federal government trains and deputizes state

and local law enforcement agents to act as immigration officers. Though the program has largely been gutted by the Obama administration, Congress clearly intended for it to serve as a cooperative mechanism for federal, state, and local law enforcement in the enforcement of immigration laws. Specifically, the 287(g) program, named after the section in which it appears in the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, permits the DHS Secretary to enter into an agreement with states and localities to authorize state and local officials to investigate, apprehend, detain, and transport illegal aliens. Significantly, no such agreement is required for states and localities to be able to *communicate* with DHS regarding the immigration status of any individual, or to otherwise *cooperate* in regards to the identification, apprehension, detention, or removal of illegal aliens. By

expressly ensuring no formal agreement is required for state and local governments to communicate and cooperate with federal immigration officials, Congress made clear there is a role for them to play in protecting their communities.

Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the states' ability to protect their constituents from the harmful effects of illegal immigration. Upholding a California prohibition on the knowing employment of unau-

Congress intended a free flow of information between all levels of government when it comes to immigration status.

thorized workers, the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1976 case *De Canas v. Bica*, recognized that the states have authority to act with respect to illegal aliens where the action mirrors federal objectives and furthers a legitimate state goal. And, although the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1982 case of *Plyler v. Doe* ultimately struck down a Texas law withholding state funds from local schools for the K-12 education of illegal aliens, it nonetheless recognized a state's need to legislate against the negative consequences of illegal immigration.

The Court emphasized that, "Despite the exclusive federal control of this Nation's borders, [it] cannot conclude that the States are without any power to deter the influx of persons entering the United States against federal law, and whose numbers might have a discernible impact on traditional state concerns."

More recently, in the 2012 case *Arizona v. U.S.*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a provision requiring state and local law enforcement to make a reasonable attempt to determine the immigration status of persons involved in a lawful stop when officers have a reasonable suspicion that the person is unlawfully present. The Court found that the state provision did not conflict with federal law; rather, the Court said it fostered the cooperation expressly encouraged in federal law between federal officials and state and local officials. In drawing its conclusion, the Court noted "Consultation between federal and state officials is an important feature of the immigration system. Congress has made clear that no formal agreement or special training needs to be in place for state officers to 'communicate with the [Federal Government] regarding the immigration status of any individual....'"

State and Local Plan of Action

Recognizing this critical role that both Congress and the Supreme Court have realized for state and local governments in the enforcement of federal immigration laws, FAIR has developed the following list of actions state and local law and policymakers can take to combat the harmful effects of illegal immigration and unchecked legal immigration.

END SANCTUARY POLICIES

Communication and cooperation by state and local law enforcement with federal officials is essential to reducing the adverse impact of illegal immigration. State and local law enforcement act as force multipliers, increasing the eyes and ears of federal immigration agents in their jurisdictions. Despite the importance of state and local coopera-

Did you know...

The U.S. is home to more than **300** sanctuary jurisdictions.

tion, some jurisdictions nonetheless implement "sanctuary polices" that restrict or all together prohibit such cooperation. Sanctuary policies are diverse and may be enacted through a variety of means such as local ordinances, executive orders, and internal law enforcement agency policy. This oftentimes makes them difficult to identify and define.

One of the more recent and pervasive forms of sanctuary policies are those that prevent or otherwise limit state and local officers' ability to cooperate with U.S. Im-

migration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer requests. Detainers are used to request that state and local law enforcement either notify ICE that it is about to release a criminal alien, or to maintain custody of the alien for up to 48-hours for ICE pick-up. **ICE detainers are a critical tool created by the federal government to address threats by criminal aliens picked up by state and local law enforcement.** Under the Obama administration, however, ICE

Sanctuary policies are diverse and may be enacted through a variety of means such as local ordinances, executive orders, and internal law enforcement agency policy.

detainers are only issued to a very narrow class of criminal aliens whom the administration determines to be a national security threat or have already been *convicted* of a crime. This makes following ICE detainers even more critical given that they are so narrowly issued. **Rather than obstruct the enforcement of federal law, law enforcement should work cooperatively with the federal government to ensure a uniform system of law that protects public safety.**





FAIR
RECOMMENDS

To combat sanctuary policies and their harmful effects, FAIR recommends enacting state and local legislation and executive actions to...

Prohibit sanctuary policies, ordinances, and practices that prohibit or restrict communication and cooperation between state and local authorities and the federal government regarding immigration status and enforcement.

.....

Enact policies that encourage and incentivize state and local cooperation.

.....

Prohibit state agencies and local governments that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration officials, or otherwise implement a sanctuary

policy, from receiving state or local funding, grants, or other forms of financial aid or tax breaks.

.....

Permit or require the collection and maintenance of immigration status information by state and local government employees, law enforcement officers, school administrators, and employees of public benefits agencies.

.....

Require law enforcement to make a reasonable attempt during a lawful stop to check the immigration status of

anyone whom they arrest or detain if they have reasonable suspicion to believe the individual is unlawfully present.

.....

Create a cause of action to allow the victims of crime by aliens released as a result of a sanctuary policy to file a lawsuit against the entity responsible for such policy.

.....

Require that state and local law enforcement comply with ICE detainers and administrative warrants.

Authorize state and local law enforcement to transport aliens for ICE within the state.

.....

Grant federal immigration officials access to state and local jails and prisons, including contact with inmates, access to jail records, and entry to facilities for interviews.

.....

Require state and local jails and prisons to collect immigration status information on inmates.

Require state and local jails and prisons to make public the number of illegal and criminal aliens in law enforcement custody.

Create a system to track and make public the number of times state and local law enforcement has to contact DHS to verify an individual's immigration status. Likewise, monitor and publicize the response rate.

.....

Require that state judges take immigration status into consideration when setting bail.

.....

Authorize and encourage local law enforcement agencies to seek and enter into 287(g) agreements with the federal government.

Prohibit the transporting of illegal aliens in accordance with federal law.

.....

Prohibit the harboring of illegal aliens in accordance with federal law.

.....

Governors may prohibit entities and officials that enact sanctuary policies, including refusing to cooperate with ICE detainees, from receiving grants and funding under the control of the executive branch.

PROTECT AMERICAN WORKERS

The availability of jobs is the primary driver of illegal immigration into the U.S. As such, **eliminating this employment magnet is crucial.** Despite what the amnesty lobby claims, there is no such thing as “a job an American won’t do.” To the contrary, there are only conditions under which an American will not work, and treatment that all individuals—regardless of immigration status—deserve. Allowing illegal alien labor to persist only diminishes the working conditions and wages of all individuals.

A 2013 study conducted by Harvard University’s George Borjas concluded that illegal immigration reduces wages for the most economically vulnerable Americans, who primarily work low-wage jobs requiring minimal levels of education. The study found that while the net benefits to native-born Americans from illegal aliens are small, unauthorized labor reduces the wage of native

workers by an estimated \$99 to \$118 billion a year, straining families and public welfare systems.

As such, worksite enforcement of our immigration laws is one of the simplest ways to prevent wage depression, ensure a legal workforce, and protect American jobs. In the 2011 case of *Chamber of Commerce of the U.S. v. Whiting*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a state’s ability to require employers to use the federal E-Verify employment verification system and revoke the business licenses of those who hire unauthorized workers. Five years later, 19 state legislatures have validly enacted laws that require all or some employers to use E-Verify to confirm the work authorization of newly hired employees. In addition, governors from Florida and Idaho have issued executive orders requiring state agencies to utilize the federally maintained system.



Unauthorized labor reduces the wage of native workers by an estimated **\$99 to \$118 billion a year**, straining families and public welfare systems.



To continue the fight to protect American workers, FAIR recommends state and local lawmakers take the following steps...

Require all public and private employers, including contractors and subcontractors, to use E-Verify.

Revoke the business licenses of employers who knowingly hire unauthorized aliens in accordance with 8 U.S.C. 1324(a)(h)(2).

Ensure "whistleblower" protections for

employees to report violations of the federal Form I-9 and other immigration related employment practices by employers.

Create a cause of action for U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to file a complaint under state law for violations of employment law relating to unauthorized aliens.

Prohibit employers from deducting wages paid to unauthorized workers, or otherwise getting tax breaks at the state level.

In the absence of action by state and local legislators, governors may issue an executive order to require executive branch agencies to use E-Verify for all new hires.

PROHIBIT PUBLIC BENEFITS AND OTHER INCENTIVES

While most legal immigrants may access welfare and other means-tested public benefits after their probationary five-year waiting period is complete, illegal aliens are generally prohibited from ever accessing benefits. Nonetheless, several exceptions to this general rule exist, including emergency medical care, immunizations, short-term emergency disaster relief, certain nutrition assistance programs such as WIC and TEFAP, and a free public K-12 education. In addition to these programs, federal law permits state legislatures to grant further benefits to illegal aliens. Benefits granted by the states may include anything from non-emergency health care, to in-state tuition rates at public universities and colleges, to driver's licenses and privilege cards.





FAIR
RECOMMENDS

To preserve limited taxpayer dollars and ensure Americans and legal immigrants are put first, FAIR recommends state and local lawmakers take the following actions...

In-State Tuition

One of the most common types of benefits for illegal aliens comes in the form of in-state tuition rates and financial aid for post-secondary education. Public colleges and universities around the U.S. are experiencing

Prohibit illegal aliens from receiving state and local public benefits and assistance. Ensure that enforcement mechanisms are in place to prevent loopholes.

Require state and local government agencies to use the Systematic Alien Verification for

Entitlements Program (SAVE) to verify benefits eligibility.

Report to state legislatures and local boards the costs of providing benefits to illegal aliens, including but not limited to: health care, governmental services, judicial and

law enforcement expenditures, and educational expenses.

Resist initiatives to grant illegal aliens health care benefits, including seeking federal waivers from Affordable Care Act restrictions.

public institutions in 2014-2015 was nearly \$23,000. Moreover, the NCES estimates that the average annual student loan debt is increasing.

Granting in-state tuition and other forms of subsidized financial aid to illegal aliens further strains already delicate state budgets and imposes additional burdens



FAIR
RECOMMENDS

To ensure U.S. citizen and legal immigrant students come first, FAIR advocates state lawmakers...

Prohibit illegal aliens from qualifying for in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities.

Prohibit illegal aliens from obtaining tuition assistance, grants, or other forms of waivers, fee reductions,

or financial aid at public colleges and universities.

Eliminate any existing programs that provide any form of preference in granting admission or financial aid to individuals in the country unlawfully at

public colleges and universities.

Limit public funding to private colleges and universities that provide tuition assistance, grants, or other forms of waivers, fee reductions, or financial aid to illegal aliens.

Driver's Licenses and Identification Cards

Granting illegal aliens driver's licenses or identification cards makes them invisible to enforcement authorities by giving them the one document they need most to secure employment, transact business, and register to vote. This fact is especially disturbing considering that illegal aliens are not subject to background checks or face-to-face interviews to determine the existence of any national security threat that they might pose. Even more alarming, according to the March 28, 2002 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Robert Thibadeau, director of Carnegie Mellon's Internet Security laboratory, stated that "the 19 terrorists on Sept. 11 were holding 63 state driver's licenses for identification." These documents allowed them to obtain housing, transportation and other accommodations without raising suspicion while they planned and executed their deadly conspiracy.

The image shows a Florida Driver License and a separate document from FAIR (Fair Immigration Reform) regarding driver's license policies.

Florida Driver License: The license features a photo of a man, the name "Mohamed Atta" handwritten at the bottom, and the text "FLORIDA DRIVER LICENSE CLASS E".

FAIR RECOMMENDS Document: This document has a yellow star logo and the title "TO PROTECT NATIONAL SECURITY AND PREVENT ILLEGAL ALIENS FROM USING STATE AND LOCAL ISSUED ID TO OBTAIN UNAUTHORIZED EMPLOYMENT, BENEFITS, OR SERVICES, FAIR RECOMMENDS STATE AND LOCAL LAWMAKERS...". It lists several recommendations:

- Prohibit illegal aliens from obtaining driver's licenses, permits, and other forms of driving privilege cards.
- Require proof of lawful immigration status to obtain a driver's license or identification card.
- Make driver's licenses and identification cards tamper-resistant and counterfeit proof.
- Fully comply with the federal REAL ID Act.
- If a state has driver's license reciprocity with another state, require applicants seeking to benefit under such agreement to demonstrate proof of lawful presence.
- Prohibit the use of matricula consular ID cards and other insecure forms of ID as valid identification (including for law enforcement purposes). Limit/prohibit funding to jurisdictions that violate this provision.
- States should prohibit localities from granting ID cards to illegal aliens. Limit/prohibit funding to jurisdictions that violate this provision.
- Require proof of lawful immigration status to obtain taxpayer subsidized car insurance.
- Require the impoundment of vehicles driven by unlicensed drivers.
- Penalize identity theft under state law.

Professional Licenses and Certifications

Granting professional licenses and certifications to illegal aliens is a relatively recent trend. States such as Nebraska and New York, have granted DACA recipients the ability to qualify for licenses to become doctors and teachers. Other states, such as Florida and California, have specifically granted illegal aliens the ability to become lawyers, a particularly egregious act given that by definition, illegal aliens have violated the laws they are sworn to uphold as attorneys.

Regardless of the profession involved, granting illegal aliens professional licenses and certifications is poor public policy. Giving them the green light to join certain professions undermines federal law, which expressly prohibits those without work authorization from working. In doing so, it sends the message to legal immigrants, many of whom waited in line for years, paid thousands of dollars, and underwent vigorous background checks and health screenings to come to the U.S., that they are foolish for following our immigration laws. Furthermore, **it adds unnecessary competition to Americans seeking to find employment in these professions.**



FAIR
RECOMMENDS

To protect the integrity of our immigration system and workforce, FAIR recommends state and local lawmakers...

Resist calls to allow illegal aliens, including DACA recipients, to attain professional licenses and certifications.

.....
Require as a condition to obtaining certain professional licenses and certifications that an individual possess a lawful immigration status.

GAIN OVERSIGHT OVER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

In late 2015, the Obama administration announced it would increase the number of refugees admitted by the U.S. over the next two years from 70,000 refugees annually to 85,000 in fiscal year 2016 and 100,000 in 2017. Moreover, the administration vowed to accept an additional 10,000 refugees from Syria, which the intelligence community has stated it cannot properly vet due to a lack of infrastructure in that country. These pronouncements have left many state and local leaders questioning what they can do to address the impact of refugee resettlement in their communities to keep their constituents safe.

While only the federal government may decide who can enter the country as a refugee, federal law generally requires cooperation between federal, state, and local govern-

ments when it comes to resettlement. Federal law states that the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement “shall consult” with state and local governments and voluntary non-profit agencies “concerning the sponsorship process and the intended distribution of refugees among the states and localities before their placement....” Such consultation is to occur regularly, which federal law defines as no less than quarterly. Accordingly, state and local governments should be consulted with and provided an opportunity to provide input before refugees ever set foot in a community. Federal law further requires the federal government take into account the recommendations of the state to the maximum extent possible.

As such, federal, state, and local consultation is the cornerstone of the refugee resettlement process. To be sure, state and local governments are the best suited to



discern the potential impact of refugee placement. Influxes of refugees may easily overwhelm an already overburdened community's social services and health care agencies, diminish the availability of affordable housing and job opportunities, and strain the capacity of local school districts to meet the needs of existing or anticipated student populations. **The Office of Refugee Resettlement's 2013 Annual Survey of Refugees shows that of the refugees who entered the U.S. within the last five years, nearly three-quarters receive SNAP benefits, more than half receive Medicaid or Refugee Medical Assistance, and close to a quarter receive housing assistance.**



To influence the refugee resettlement process, FAIR advocates state and local lawmakers...

Require state and local governments to assess the impact that resettling refugees will have on their communities. This may include gathering information on the impact that sending refugees to a state or locality will have on:

- the capacity of a community's social service and health care agencies to meet the needs of new and current residents;
- whether there is sufficient affordable or low-cost housing available for low-income residents;
- the capacity of local school districts and educational systems

to meet the needs of existing and anticipated student populations, including ESL individuals;

- the potential impact on public safety, law enforcement, and other emergency services;
- whether local economies can absorb new workers without sacrificing job availability for current residents; and
- the potential impact on infrastructure and the environment.

Encourage or otherwise institute policies to require local officials to document what services

are provided to already-settled refugees in the community, and the impact of such on the current population.

Institute a regular stream of communication with local representatives by meeting at least quarterly with government officials to assess how a community is addressing current refugee needs, how to address future needs, and to coordinate a refugee plan.

Establish protocol for local government officials to seek to suspend new refugee



resettlement activities in their communities.

Increase oversight of nonprofit organizations that have been delegated authority to manage refugee resettlement.

Restore authority to manage refugee resettlement in the state governments and away from unchecked non-governmental organizations.

Require state refugee coordinator to report at least quarterly to the state legislature on the measures taken to ensure that the state's refugee plan is in line with the best interest of current residents. Make reports public and easily accessible.

Withhold state-administered public benefits from newly resettled refugees if

resettlement occurs without notice or coordination with state and local officials.

Refuse to participate in the federal government's refugee resettlement grant program.

number nearly doubled to 68,541 in fiscal year 2014. Though that number declined to 39,970 in fiscal year 2015, the number of unaccompanied minors crossing in the first half of fiscal year 2016 (October 2015 to April 2016) has nearly surpassed that figure, already reaching 32,952.

With thousands more entering the U.S. each month, state and local governments struggle to manage the fiscal impact of unaccompanied minors. For instance, unaccompanied minors entering public schools require special Limited English Proficient classes conducted in Spanish or in other languag-

ADDRESS UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND BORDER SECURITY

Prior to coping with the Obama administration's increase in refugee admissions, state and local governments were blindsided in 2014 when hundreds of thousands of unaccompanied minors and family units flooded

the southwest border with Mexico. In fiscal year 2013, the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended 38,759 unaccompanied alien minors. As a result of the porous U.S.-Mexico border and the Obama administration's executive amnesty promising freedom from deportation and jobs to millions of illegal aliens, that

es indigenous to Central America, as well as other taxpayer funded services such as free and reduced school meals. According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services, more than 37,000 of the unaccompanied alien minors from the border surge were released to relatives and other sponsors between January 1, 2014 and July 31, 2014. FAIR estimated the cost of educating these new students cost state and local governments more than \$761 million for the 2014-2015 school year. This number has only increased, and will continue to do so, until our borders are secured.

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FAIR
RECOMMENDS

To address the impact of our porous borders and unaccompanied minors on state and local communities, FAIR recommends state and local lawmakers...

Require state and local governments to assess the impact that sheltering unaccompanied alien minors will have on their communities and pass legislation seeking reimbursement from Congress. This may include gathering information on the impact that unaccompanied alien minors will have on:

- social service and health care agencies;
- local school districts and educational systems;
- public safety, law enforcement, and other emergency services;
- the local economy and youth employment; and
- the infrastructure and the environment.

Enact zoning legislation or issue regulations to restrict and regain control over shelters and housing for unaccompanied minors.

Local governments should create a public notice, comment, and hearing process to approve the resettling of large numbers of unaccompanied minors.

Border State governors should dispatch members of the state National Guard to patrol and deter unlawful border crossings and smuggling.

Border States should improve state and

local infrastructure (i.e. access roads, street lighting) near and along the border to improve federal, state, and local law enforcement access to critical enforcement areas.

State and local law enforcement in Border States should create cooperative partnerships with U.S. Border Patrol and other federal agencies to strengthen border controls and enhance safety in the surrounding public lands.

CONCLUSION

With 12 million illegal aliens currently in the U.S., virtually every state is subject to the problems caused by illegal immigration and unchecked legal immigration. Taxpayers are realizing that immigration is not just a “Border State” issue, but rather a tangible and costly problem in their own backyard. At the local level, massive immigration is creating increased competition for scarce jobs, lowering wages, increasing the cost of education and health care, overwhelming public benefits, and compromising public safety. State and local governments bear the majority of the price tag of illegal immigration, an estimated \$84 billion out of the approximately \$113 billion annual estimated cost.

While the federal government is responsible for regulating immigration into the U.S., state and local law enforcement and communities can – and should – play an important role to help ensure that immigration law is effectively enforced.

Indeed, in its creation of federal immigration law, Congress clearly envisioned a scheme by which state and local governments and law enforcement would share, rather than hide, information with federal immigration officials, and assist, rather than impede, in enforcement efforts. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld this concept of collaborative federalism time and time again.

As the American dream becomes increasingly elusive for U.S. citizens, state and local lawmakers have a decision to make. They can stand back and watch as America’s immigration system is systematically undermined by non-enforcement policies and special interests, or they can stand up and look for solutions to help maintain the rule of law and institute policies that guarantee fairness and opportunity for all Americans.



The Federation for American Immigration Reform is the largest and most influential nonprofit immigration organization in the United States. Made up of more than 500,000 concerned citizens, we share a common belief that our nation's immigration policies must be reformed to serve America's needs and interests today and into the future.

Since our founding in 1979, we have been leading the call for immigration reform, using our grassroots network to help Americans use their voices to speak up for effective, sensible immigration policies and legislation.

We believe our nation can and must have immigration policies that are nondiscriminatory and designed to serve the societal, environmental, and economic needs of our country. Recent polls show that the American public feels the same way.

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ISBN 978-0-9978627-0-6

