
**POSITION STATEMENT OF “LA PLAZA” REGARDING INDIANA SENATE BILL 345
(Former 335)**

La Plaza is a community-based organization whose purpose is to Educate, Empower and Integrate the Central Indiana Hispanic/Latino community. Its Board of Directors, members and constituency reflect the economic, educational, political and cultural institutions of Central Indiana. La Plaza serves approximately 3,000 families annually and an estimated 30,000 Hoosiers attended the 2008 Fiesta Indianapolis, a celebration of Hispanic/Latino culture since 1981.

As representatives of the Hispanic/Latino Community of Central Indiana, La Plaza stands in strong Opposition to Senate Bill 345. Rather than advancing Indiana, Senate Bill 345, as drafted would have far reaching and long-lasting negative effects on our community.

The negative effects include the following:

- Loss of jobs and the closing of businesses in Indiana. Arizona and Oklahoma passed similar legislation and are experiencing negative economic effects from a short-sighted approach to dealing with the immigration problems.
- An increase in the price of basic services and a simultaneous decrease in the availability of basic services resulting from the shortage of workers in the various industries, including light and service industry and in the already stressed construction industry.
- An unnecessary use of Hoosier taxpayer’s money to attempt to enforce a law that is a Federal prerogative. This is particularly troubling when state funding is being cut for many worthwhile programs.
- A negative emotional impact on immigrants who may view this legislation as a threat to their security and economic stability making Indiana a less desirable place to live depriving Indiana of intellectual and physical capital.
- Damage to the image of the State of Indiana as a welcoming and viable location for foreign businesses and as a State that values diversity.
- Additional downward pressure on the real estate market as families move to communities that value and embrace diversity
- Creates additional demand for social services support for children whose undocumented parents have been placed in custody and/or deported, thus, separating U.S. born children from their families.

The bill ignores that the growth of the Hispanic population has brought cultural richness and economic vitality to many communities in Indiana. The traditions and heritage of Hispanic Latinos has contributed to the improvement of pluralism and diversity of the Hoosier State.

Hoosiers should be aware of several important facts about undocumented Hispanics:

- 93% of the men are fully employed, which means that they are paying income taxes, Medicare, and Social Security fees.
- The Social Security Administration receives roughly \$8 billion into the “earning suspense file” which is largely driven by funds from undocumented workers who will never receive any tax benefits for their labor; therefore they are helping to fund a program that they will not benefit from.
- The Urban Institute (March, 2007) reports that 60% of undocumented people work in janitorial services, landscaping, fast food restaurants, and in lower paid agricultural and construction jobs; while many may not perceive these jobs to be attractive or important, these are important services for our society to operate properly.

Undocumented immigration is a very complex human issue and it is the end-result of the interplay of different forces, some of which “pull” and some of which “push” individuals from one country to another. However, there is a common thread among all those individuals who become undocumented immigrants: they are looking for better opportunities for themselves and for their families. As a complex human issue, undocumented immigration requires a profound, comprehensive and definitive humane solution which Senate Bill 345, as drafted, does not provide. Rather than devoting precious resources to legislation that does not solve the immigration problem, Indiana would be better served if our elected officials dedicate their energy to rectifying the broad challenges of economic vitality, education and public health for the benefit of all. La Plaza is prepared to provide Indiana’s elected officials with information focused on providing solutions that address all parties’ needs and that remains consistent with our country’s values.