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# Diversity & Human Rights

## focus

### February: Black History Month

*"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"*  
-Martin Luther King Jr.

### Get Involved...

*by Cristy Gleave, Chair  
Human Rights Commission*

For many years Utahns of diversity have had hard-fought battles in the Utah Legislature. A simple Hate Crimes Bill originally sponsored by the late State Senator Pete Suazo finally passed ten years later after a continued fight by Rep. David Litvack. That's right, ten years. Finally a Hate Crime Law that protects every citizen of Utah - no matter your race, no matter your sexual orientation. Change would never have occurred without the hard work of ordinary citizens with extraordinary voices.

Every time someone comes out of the closet, reports a hate crime to police, writes a letter to the editor, or telephones a state representative or senator to ask for support on legislation, our diverse community makes progress. Pointing to the power of individuals, the Dalai Lama said, *"Since periods of great change, such as the present one, come so rarely in human history, it is up*

*to each of us to make the best use of our time to help create a happier world."*

When Governor Huntsman vetoes a bill that would harm the children of LGBT people, great change happens. When Mayor Becker hands a Domestic Partner Registry ordinance to the Salt Lake City Council and they pass it with an astonishing 7-0 vote, great change happens. Or when a senator or representative agrees to co-sponsor a bill that helps protect our city's immigrant population, you can be certain there is at least one ordinary citizen who can take credit for helping to make it happen. Change does not occur in a vacuum. Only by speaking out for equality do we begin to see gains for our diverse community. Won't you consider, as Gandhi suggests, becoming a part of the change you'd like to see in the world? Are you ready to stand up and be counted?

Contact the Mayor's Office of Diversity and Human Rights at (801) 535-7734 to see how you can help today.



Check out <http://le.utah.gov/documents/bills.htm> to see which bills currently being debated on Utah's Capitol Hill affect you.

### Mayor opposes repeal of in-state tuition for undocumented students

Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker unequivocally opposes the repeal of in-state tuition for undocumented students who attend institutions of higher learning in the State of Utah.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that all children in America are entitled to a public education, and they are subsequently encouraged in high school to continue their educational

goals and professional pursuits at colleges and universities. Salt Lake City is home to a significant number of students whose families are undocumented. Many of these youth yearn to learn, and are undoubtedly the hope of brighter day. They, their parents and families, are vital to the core of our community, and provide enhanced cultural and economic contributions for quality of life and betterment of society.

*"All children in America are entitled to a public education"*

In the spirit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness through educational attainment and application of knowledge for all residents of Salt Lake City, Mayor Ralph Becker and his administration respectively petition the Utah State Senate and Legislative leaders to denounce HB 241.



# Immigration Hot-Button Issue at Legislature

by Antonella Packard, President  
Latin American Chamber of Commerce

The history of our beautiful state is laced with immigration. The State Capitol has a statue in its rotunda paying homage to immigration. This land already had people who called it home, yet many came from various corners of the world to carve a place for themselves and seek a better life for their families. Sadly, today there is an atmosphere of animosity toward immigration. Immigration is almost a dirty word. Immigration is a hot-button issue this legislative session. Inaction at the federal level has created frustration at the state level. Emotions are running high. Utah lawmakers have decided to take matters into their own hands without taking the time to study a very complicated issue. Many lawmakers claim this is what their constituency wants. Lawmakers say they want to make it very uncomfortable for undocumented individuals to live in Utah. Nonetheless, in their haste to pass laws, rather than to pressure our congressional delegation to work towards a solution in Washington, legislators' actions will make our state unsafe for the entire community. Rational arguments in favor or against certain bills introduced this legislative session have not been entertained or studied as to how the bills will impact the population at large.

**House Bill 239, Driver License Qualification Amendments.** This bill repeals Utah's driving privilege card. The card allows undocumented immigrants to register and insure their motor vehicles. If this bill passes into law the number of uninsured motorists on the road will increase. More uninsured motorists lead to higher insurance premiums for the rest of us. The State of Utah will also lose approximately \$1 million in revenues from the card. The issue concerns not only immigration, but also public safety. People come to the United States of America to work. Not having a driver privilege card will not prevent undocumented people from coming to the United States or from driving. Please contact your representatives to ask them to opt for a safer community and oppose **HB 239**. Another bill that impacts the community is **HB 237, Illegal Immigration Enforcement Act**, which forces the Department of Public Safety to enter into an agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Under this proposal, officers volunteer to perform certain functions of an immigration agent after completing required training by ICE. Local law enforcement agencies statewide would have the

option to participate. There is more to this bill than first meets the eye. Officers would be away for six weeks for very expensive training. Who pays the cost has yet to be determined through this bill. Local agencies will incur staffing shortages while officers are away at training. There are some human factors as well. Many are concerned some officers might violate the constitutional or civil rights of U.S. citizens or legal immigrants, with no accountability. Ethnic populations tend to under report crime in their communities. This is especially true for women and children in abusive situations. Many prefer to endure abuse rather than have a family member or themselves deported. Passage of this bill would make an already vulnerable population even more vulnerable. It is hard to imagine our great nation has outdated immigration laws that do not fit our economic or social needs. This is a complex, multi-faceted issue that even those familiar with the legal code have a hard time unraveling, let alone the average citizen. There is a bill that may perhaps merit passage, **SB 97, Immigration Task Force**, sponsored by Senator Scott Jenkins.

The bill proposes to form a task force to study the impact of immigration legislation before enacting laws. A resolution urging Congress to address illegal immigration issues is also being proposed. The resolution encourages Utah's congressional delegation to take up immigration reform in Washington and resolve matters in Congress, where the issue belongs.

## MESSAGE FROM MAYOR RALPH BECKER



We're off to a great start in City Hall. The proposal for a City-Wide Domestic Partnership Registry was voted unanimously by City Council. It is our first step in achieving equality, dignity and respect for all city residents. I look forward to your participation as we encourage, embrace and celebrate the diverse communities in Salt Lake City.



Salt Lake City

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