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Diversity & Human Rights

focus

May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Cross-Pollination: Bringing Together Utah's Voices By Scott McLeod

Recently, a group of Utah researchers studied hazardous materials throughout the state and paid particular attention to the different communities living in proximity to those materials. Researchers found that people of color are 50 percent more likely to live in proximity to hazardous materials than Caucasians. Why is this the case?

An explanation for the difference points to the correlation between ethnicity and socioeconomic status. In Utah, like in most states around the country, people of color live disproportionately in poor areas with low real estate values. Wealthier neighborhoods, on the other hand – largely Caucasian – have a great deal of influence and are better able to resist encroaching health hazards and maintain a higher quality of life. This means that when it comes to storing or disposing hazardous materials, poor communities of color are a likely target. So why does this matter?

The Inclusion Center for Community and Justice is a Utah-based non-profit that has been fighting prejudice and discrimination since 1967. Since that time, our work has been primarily focused on social issues such as racism, sexism, and classism. Increasingly however, it is apparent that the issues facing our community are much more integrated than we sometimes believe.

The research on hazardous materials makes this point very clear. Yet, while the issues become more integrated, many of our community organizations are doing just the opposite, becoming increasingly fragmented. Utah is rich with important and effective organizations serving the community in a myriad of different ways, from faith groups to homeless advocacy organizations, these affiliations are integral to the fabric of Utah life. In addition, there are environmental organizations, political groups, health advocates, recreational organizations, business and commerce affiliations, and many, many more.

And yet, while all of these groups serve an incredibly important *individual* purpose, many of our state's most pressing issues are intersecting in unprecedented ways and not relegated to one area in particular. Take, for example, healthcare costs and home foreclosure; environmental issues and race relations; education and poverty; these issues are integrated to the point that fragmented organizations will not be able to tackle them on their own. To the Inclusion Center, this is a clear sign of the need for "cross-pollination" among Utah's organizations. It is time that social justice advocates and environmental groups see their work as aligned, that business leaders and educational policymakers together tackle the achievement gap in our schools, or that faith groups and civic groups consider together how they can achieve inclusive solutions to challenging issues



such as immigration and homelessness. Without cross-pollination plants and flowers stagnate and have no means to grow and rejuvenate. The same is true with our community organizations. It is time to come together and bring new ideas to fruition.

To learn more about the Inclusion Center, or to attend the Inclusion Summit, our attempt at bringing groups and organizations together, please visit us at www.inclusioncenter.org or call us at 801-832-3260.





Summary Restatement of Utah Senate Bill 81

By Esperanza Granados

Salt Lake City Human Rights Commission, Vice Chair

Utah Senate Bill 81, the Illegal Immigration Bill (SB 81)¹ is scheduled to take effect beginning July 1, 2009. Below is a summary restatement of the provisions of SB 81. Citations have been provided for federal statutes that address the same or similar issues. However, this article does not provide a comparison or an analysis between the federal statutes and SB 81, or its potential effect on constitutional or discriminatory claims. The citations for federal statutes in the footnotes are provided simply to show which provisions of SB 81 are addressed in some form by federal law. The information provided below should not be construed as legal advice.

Individuals must provide proof of legal residency

- In an arrest for felony or DUI, individuals who cannot provide proof of legal residency will be reported to Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE), a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security within 48 hours of confinement.¹
- If incarcerated, individuals who cannot provide proof of legal residency must prove they are not a flight risk before obtaining a bond.¹
- To obtain a state or federal public benefit, individuals

- and certify they have legal residency.¹
- To obtain a restaurant liquor license or private club license, individuals must also be residing lawfully in the U.S.¹

Public Employers must use E-Verify¹

- All public employers must participate in the Status Verification System (E-Verify) to verify work eligibility status of new employees.
- Contractors and subcontractors contracting with public employers must also register and participate with the E-Verify System.

Employers cannot replace workers who have legal residency with undocumented workers¹

- It is “unlawful” to discharge a lawful employee while retaining an undocumented worker in the same job category.

Transporting and harboring an undocumented person is a Class A Misdemeanor

- It will be illegal to “transport into this state or for a distance of 100 miles within the state” a person illegally in the

U.S. if:¹

- o You know or should know that the person is undocumented, and
- o You do it for “commercial advantage or private financial gain”
- It will be illegal to “conceal, harbor, shelter from detection” a person residing illegally in this State if:¹
 - o You know the person is undocumented, and
 - o It is for commercial advantage or private financial gain

The Attorney General’s responsibilities¹

- The Utah Attorney General must establish a “Fraudulent Documents Identification Unit” to investigate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who sell or distribute fraudulent documents. (Conditional on available funding.)
- The Utah Attorney General must negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Justice, or the Department of Homeland Security, regarding enforcement of immigration laws by local law enforcement.

The ACLU of Utah wrote an article titled, “The Impact of Utah SB 81, ‘Illegal Immigration.’” The article can be found at www.acluutah.org.

To learn more about the SLC Human Rights Commission visit www.slcgov.com/HRcomm



May is National Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage month, a time to celebrate the Asian and Pacific Islander history and culture in the United States. The celebration originally began in 1978 when a Joint Resolution signed by President Jimmy Carter designated the first 10 days of May to Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. In 1990 President George H. W. Bush expanded the celebration to the entire month.



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