

Oregonians for Immigration Reform

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OFIR Newsletter, January 2008

Notice: If you have email, please send your email address to OFIR.

OFIR Members and Supporters: Now is the time that you can make a difference !

Saturday, January 19th is the date of the Respect for Law Act initiative kick off meeting. The meeting will start at 1:00 p.m. and will be held at the Best Western Mill Creek Inn in Salem. The Inn is located at 3125 Ryan Dr. SE, near Costco, just off of Mission St. See driving instructions at the end of this letter.

At the meeting we will discuss the best way to collect signatures. We will have signs and signature sheets to pass out. Come with ideas.

The Respect for Law Act initiative would accomplish three important changes to Oregon law:

- Require proof of legal presence and valid Social Security number in order to receive an Oregon driver license. In addition it would end the practice of issuing 8-year driver licenses to individuals with 6-month visas.
- No statute, regulation or order would prohibit public employees including law enforcement personnel from cooperating with federal agencies in the enforcement of immigration laws.
- Require evidence of citizenship when registering to vote for the first time in Oregon.

Because the Governor and the State Legislature have not addressed the impact of illegal immigration in Oregon we need to take matters into our own hands and pass the Respect for Law Act initiative. There is nothing we can do that will have a greater impact on illegal immigration here in Oregon.

The Respect for Law Act is Initiative no. 112; its ballot title is: "Allows State Cooperation With Immigration Enforcement; Requires Certain Documentation For Voter Registration And Driving Privileges." Only persons registered to vote in Oregon can sign. 82,769 valid signatures are needed to get the measure on the Nov. 2008 ballot.

RALLY FOR THE INITIATIVE AT STATE CAPITOL, Monday, February 4

On Monday at 9:00 a.m., February 4th, OFIR will be on the front steps of the State Capitol building in Salem, collecting signatures on the Respect for Law Act initiative. We encourage all who can be there to come and help.

February 4th is the first day of the special session of the Oregon Legislature and it will afford everyone the opportunity to visit with your state senator and representative and talk to them about your concerns over the impact of illegal immigration in Oregon.

Because the State Legislature earlier this year revised the law on initiatives, rules of many years' standing have changed. Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, it will no longer be necessary that all signatures on one sheet be from the same county. Also, a person can print a signature sheet for one person online at the OFIR website, sign it, and mail it to OFIR. Signature sheets with spaces for 10 signatures will be in use also. These new 10-person signature sheets, which are on white paper, are available from OFIR.

Signature gathering began in November and December, using official forms on yellow paper printed under the previous rules. Those signature sheets have now been submitted to the Secretary of State, and from now on only signature forms compliant with the new rules will be in circulation, and they are the only ones that can be accepted.

OFIR held a press conference at the State Capitol on Nov. 13 to announce the launching of the Initiative. OFIR Pres. Ludwick, Reps. Kim Thatcher and Linda Flores spoke there, and the event was well-covered by Oregon media.

Only 3 days later, Governor Kulongoski issued Executive Order no. 07-22, "Standards for Issuance of Oregon Driver Licenses and Identification Cards," including a requirement for applicants to provide DMV with a valid Social Security number and ordering that the DMV shall verify with the Social Security Administration the accuracy of Social Security numbers provided. The DMV called for public comment on its draft rules implementing the Governor's Executive Order and held a hearing on Dec. 18, at which Jim Ludwick and several OFIR members testified. The Oregon Transportation Commission must approve the rules before they can become final; the Commission is scheduled to meet in January.

The Governor's Executive Order is most welcome; however, it is only an Executive Order and could be changed at any time by the Governor or his successors. In contrast, OFIR's Initiative on drivers' licenses, if on the ballot and passed by the voters, would become law and could not be changed without action by the Legislature. Also, the OFIR Initiative would end the practice of issuing 8-year driver's licenses to individuals with 6-month visas. The other two provisions of the Initiative, requiring proof of citizenship for voter registrants, and allowing police cooperation

with federal immigration authorities, also would become law. These would be extremely valuable tools for controlling illegal immigration and safeguarding the integrity of our elections.

A November poll by Fox5/Washington Times/Rasmussen Reports showed that 77 percent of the adults surveyed opposed making driver's licenses available to illegal aliens. Self-identified Republicans opposed the licenses by 88 percent; among independents and Democrats, 75 percent and 68 percent opposition, respectively, was reported.

LATEST NEWS FROM OREGON LEGISLATURE -- In preparation for the opening of the State Legislature in February, the House and Senate Transportation Committees are scheduled to meet at 1 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 11 in Hearing Room A at the Capitol. This will be a public hearing and work session to discuss two "Legislative Concepts," the second of which (Legislative Concept 32) requires applicants for issuance or renewal of driver's license to provide proof of legal presence in U.S. To read the text of Concept 32, which closely resembles OFIR's Respect for Law initiative, visit http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/commsrvs/HTRANS_LC_32.pdf

IMMIGRATION AT RECORD HIGH -- The immigrant population of the U.S., legal and illegal, reached a record of 37.9 million in 2007, according to a report by the Center for Immigration Studies, based on Census Bureau data. <http://www.cis.org/article/2007/back1007.html>

Among other findings:

Overall, nearly one in three immigrants is an illegal alien. Half of Mexican and Central American immigrants and one-third of South American immigrants are illegal.

Since 2000, 10.3 million immigrants have arrived – the highest seven-year period of immigration in U.S. history. More than half of post-2000 arrivals (5.6 million) are estimated to be illegal aliens.

33 percent of immigrant-headed households use at least one welfare program, compared to 19 percent for native households. Among households headed by immigrants from Mexico, the largest single group, 51 percent use at least one welfare program. --- Immigration accounts for virtually all of the national increase in public school enrollment over the last two decades. In 2007, there were 10.8 million school-age children from immigrant families in the United States.

Recent immigration has had no significant impact on the nation's age structure. Without the 10.3 million post-2000 immigrants, the average age in America would be virtually unchanged at 36.5 years. (This means that bringing immigrants in supposedly to support Social Security for an aging U.S. population is a mistake.)

NEW CENSUS BUREAU PROJECTION – U.S. population hit 300 million in October 2006. On Dec. 27, 2007, the Census Bureau projected U.S. population to be 303,146,284 on Jan. 1, 2008. Currently, immigration is expected to add one person every 30 seconds.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The SAVE Act has been introduced in Congress (HR 4088 & S.2366) . It would increase border infrastructure through fencing and technology, and require all employers to use the E-verify system to confirm that employees are legally present and authorized to work in the U.S. As of Dec. 30, there were 132 cosponsors to the House bill, but no Congressperson from Oregon is a cosponsor! Please contact your Rep. and Senator and urge them to cosponsor and support the SAVE Act (Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement Act of 2007); toll-free numbers: 866-220-0044, 866-340-9281.

The E-Verify program offered to employers by the Dept. of Homeland Security has been successful in screening out illegal workers; 98% of workers who are actually authorized to work in the U.S. have gotten an instant “green light,” according to a recent study by the DHS and Westat research group.

STATES ACTING AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

As of Nov. 16, 2007, no fewer than 1562 pieces of legislation related to immigrants and immigration had been introduced among the 50 state legislatures. Of these bills, 244 became law in 46 states. State legislators introduced almost 3 times more bills in 2007 than in 2006, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

WAKE UP, CONGRESS!

Wake Up, Congress! America or Amexico? – This is the title of a new book by Paulette Poole, of Salem OR. In it, Ms. Poole, the daughter of immigrants, exposes the negative effects of illegal immigration in contrast to images promoted by media and Congressional lawmakers. The book can be ordered online at <http://www.publishamerica.com/index.htm>. Price until Jan. 31, 2008 is \$11.95, afterwards, \$14.95. Shipping and handling extra.

PLEASE COME TO THE OFIR MEETING, Saturday, Jan.19, 1 p.m.

Driving directions to Best Western Mill Creek Inn:

From I-5, take exit 253, which is the intersection of I-5 and State roads 22 and Business 99E. Go West on 22 (Mission St.) a short distance to Hawthorne Ave. Turn R on Hawthorn Ave. to the first left, which is Ryan Drive. Turn left on Ryan Drive, by Denny’s Restaurant, and proceed to Mill Creek Inn just beyond.

From downtown Salem: Go east on Mission St. (State Rd. 22). Follow 22 just past the Airport and turn left on Hawthorne Ave. Then take the first left (almost an immediate left) into Ryan Drive; you will see the Inn directly ahead.