

Georgia insight

*"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a*

Don't Stop Now! Keep Calling on Bills that Tighten Illegal Alien Law Some Local Governments Don't Comply with Current Law

Background. It's been three years since the governor signed into law S.B. 529 in 2006. Its 14 pages explained benefits illegal aliens *could get* and restrictions on the benefits they *should not* be given. For example: regardless of citizenship, education is provided for children K – 12. Medical treatment is provided in emergencies. Prenatal care is available to women. Everyone is eligible for public health immunizations and communicable disease treatment. Everyone is eligible for private charity and short-term, non-cash, in-kind emergency disaster relief.

But some local governments persist in disregarding the citizenship of applicants and continue providing public welfare benefits, employment and *business licenses* to illegal aliens. So, local officials, themselves, are breaking federal and state laws. That's not only a local problem, it negatively impacts everyone in the state – except those the law was meant to regulate.

On February 9, 2006 Senators Rogers, Hamrick, Douglas, Schaefer, Seabaugh, Goggans, *et al* introduced S.B. 529, the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act. For 48 days it was debated and changed, but finally passed – 39-16 in the Senate and in the House 119-49. It became Act 457 when the governor signed it April 17, 2006 and it took effect July 1, 2007.

Though S.B. 529 passed to regulate illegal aliens, regardless of their country of origin or whether or not they sneaked across the border or didn't leave when their visa expired, its loopholes need to be closed. So, several bills have been introduced this session to do just that.

H.B. 2 sponsored by Representatives Rice, Peake, Lindsey and Graves would penalize local governments that fail to uphold laws against illegal aliens. This bill requires the following:

- **Counties and municipalities must annually certify and demonstrate compliance with** (a) state government and contract laws, (b) work authorization programs to verify citizenship of new employees and (c) the SAVE¹ program to discern eligibility for public assistance.
- **Counties and municipalities must stop issuing business licenses to illegal aliens.** All Georgia agencies and political subdivisions must yearly verify that business licenses were issued ONLY to applicants that are in the U.S. legally and are at least 18 years of age.
- **Local governments violating these requirements would lose funding for projects in the Local Assistance Road Program.** DOT would not send grants to non-compliant locales.

H.B. 2 passed the House on March 12th, and went into Senator Jack Murphy's Senate Public Safety Committee. To get it passed, please remind Representative Rice to call Senator Murphy and ask him to pass it out of his committee. Instructions and phone numbers are listed below.

ACTION – Support. (a) Remind the bill's author, Representative Rice (404 656-5912), to ask Senator Murphy to get this out of his committee. (b) Then call the committee and ask them to vote YES on it. Public Safety Committee Senators Jack Murphy, Ch., 404 656-7127; Mullis, 656-0057; Chapman, 656-0045; Butler, 656-0075; Crosby, 656-5091; Douglas, 656-0503; Grant, 656-0082; Jones, 656-0502; Seay, 656-5095; and Freddie Powell Sims, 463-5259.

¹ Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlement (SAVE)

It's important that you continue calling on these bills. Only three days are left in this session – Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The last day is April 3rd.

In the November Election, 4,700 potential voters could not provide proof of U.S. citizenship. Later, the Secretary of State sent letters to them requesting proof of U.S. citizenship. Just over 2,000 responded with the proper documents. Over half of the 4,700 never answered the letter. In 2006 a Georgia county commissioner was fined \$80,000 for registering illegal aliens to vote.

High School and College Students Must Be U.S. Citizens or They Can't Vote
College ID does *not* signify U.S. citizenship. Voter registration is a serious issue in Georgia, as well as in the U.S. It becomes even more problematic with every new scheme that surfaces with a plan to allow illegal aliens to vote, regardless of their illegal status. Potential voter fraud is embodied between the lines in Representative Morgan's H.B. 209, introduced this session. Currently, her bill is stymied in a House committee, but, were it to pass, college and university students could register to vote by, simply, showing their school ID card, with no documentation proving they are U.S. citizens.

Since illegal aliens are attending colleges and universities throughout the country, proof of U.S. citizenship must be required if they try to register to vote, regardless of their school or age. If their attendance in higher education were not a fact, there would be no debate whether they should be charged in-state tuition. A UGA official told me, personally, that, most likely, illegal aliens *are* enrolled in Georgia's higher education facilities, though he didn't know how many.

18-year-old high school students, who are *not* U.S. citizens, are *not* eligible to vote. The state voter registration law was amended in 2001 to allow school administrators to arrange for in-school voter registration, during the first week of April each year, for high school students 18 and older. One might assume that the Secretary of State Elections Division would screen each registrant for citizenship eligibility, but that requirement is not written into the 2001 law.

Remedy for the Above Situations ***Proof of Citizenship for Voter Registration***

H.B. 45, introduced by Representative Mills of District 25 and Roger Williams of District 4, passed the House 102 – 63 on March 4th and went to the Senate Ethics Committee on March 5th. If it passes, applicants must show proof of U.S. citizenship to be eligible to vote in Georgia. Persons registering by mail must supply current valid ID when voting for the first time. Proof of voter registration from another state or another county will *not* be satisfactory evidence of citizenship. Acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship is any one of these five documents:

- (a) A legible photocopy of the applicant's birth certificate;
- (b) the applicant's U.S. passport or a legible photocopy of its number and pertinent pages;
- (c) the applicant's U.S. naturalization documents or certificate of naturalization number;
- (d) documents or proof required in the 1986 federal Immigration Reform and Control Act; and
- (e) the applicant's Bureau of Indian Affairs or tribal treaty or tribal enrollment card number.

ACTION – Support. (a) Ask Representative Mills at 404 656-5099 to ask Ethics Committee Chairman Senator Johnson at 404 656-5109 to put H.B. 45 on the agenda for his next meeting. (b) Then, ask Ethics Committee members to vote YES on it: Senators Hooks, 656-0065; Crosby, 463-5258; Butler, 656-0075; Douglas, 656-0503; Hamrick, 656-0036; Jack Hill, 656-5038; Lester Jackson, 463-5261; Reed, 463-1379; Stone, 463-2518; & Thomas, 656-6436. (c) Ask your senator to vote YES when it gets to the Senate floor for a vote.

Bill Requires Applicants to Take Driver's License Test in English

For years, Georgia has expended huge amounts of tax dollars so foreigners could take driver's license tests in languages other than English. Georgia motorists are put in unnecessary danger when foreigners who can't read English operate motor vehicles on public roads and highways.

S.B. 67 was introduced by Senator Murphy who wants all applicants to take both written and oral driver's license tests in English, with *one* exception. Those seeking a temporary license could be tested in a foreign language, for an *accumulated total of six years*. But after that, their tests would be in English. S.B. 67 passed the Senate, the House Motor Vehicles Committee, is now in House Rules and could pass. To get it passed, follow the ACTION suggestions below.

ACTION – Support. (a) Call Senator Murphy at 404 656-7127 and ask him to request that his bill be put on the Rules Calendar for a vote by the full House. (b) Then call your representative and ask for a YES vote when it gets to the floor.

No Sanctuary for Illegal Aliens

S.B. 20 was introduced by Senator Pearson and analyzed in last week's *Georgia Insight*. It's included again this week because of its importance. If it passes, counties, cities, towns and communities could not enact, enforce or implement a rule, policy or ordinance to provide safe haven or public welfare benefits to illegal aliens. Local governments that provide sanctuary for illegal aliens would lose state funding and state-administered federal grants. S.B. 20 passed the Senate and could pass this session, but at this writing it remains in the House Governmental Affairs Committee. Please call several legislators in the list below and maybe it will pass.

ACTION – Support. (a) Ask Senator Pearson at 404 656-9221 to contact Representative Scott, Chairman of the House Governmental Affairs Committee and request that S.B. 20 be passed out of committee. (b) Then ask for a YES vote from Governmental Affairs Representatives Austin Scott, Ch., 404 656-5132; Meadows, 656-0298; O'Neal, 656-5103; Brooks, 656-6372; Butler, 463-2245; Chambers, 656-3949; Floyd, 656-0314; Hamilton, 656-0188; Hatfield, 656-0109; Morgan, 656-0109; Mosby, 656-0287; Oliver, 646-0265; Jay Powell, 656-0177; Alan Powell, 656-0202; and Ralston, 656-0213.

Federal Deportation of Illegal Alien Prisoners

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is responsible for enforcing the federal Immigration and Nationality Act. The ICE 287(g) plan partners state and local law enforcement with ICE, who provides federal funding and four weeks of specialized training. Since January 2006, over 950 local officers nationwide have been certified in the program. In November 2008 ICE programs in Georgia included the State Task Force and Sheriff's Offices in Cobb, Hall and Whitfield counties. In February the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that a 26-day ICE sweep of Gwinnett County inmates gathered over 900 prisoners who will be deported. Over half had prior criminal histories. The following *is a partial* list of their crimes in Gwinnett.

Murder 13, armed robbery 28, kidnapping 11, felony theft 34, felony drug offense 154, DUI 48, no driver's license 226, misdemeanor probation violation 55, felony probation violation 42, rape 15, child molestation 23, aggravated assault 38, burglary 17, hit and run 6, homicide by vehicle 1, other traffic 11, other misdemeanors 37

S.B. 136 by Senators Douglas, Rogers, Chance, Staton, Hawkins, Shafer, *et al*, requires similar screening in every Georgia county. Illegal aliens would be identified and reported to proper authorities when they enter jail and, of those already serving sentences and eligible for parole, none would be paroled without a deportation order conditioned on the prisoner's abiding by the order and all U.S. immigration laws. Violators would go back to prison to finish their sentence.

ACTION – Support. (a) Ask Senator Douglas at 404 656-0503 to contact Representative Golick at 651-7737, requesting that he pass S.B. 136 out of the House Non-Civil Judiciary Committee. Then (b) ask your representative to vote YES when it gets to the floor.

How 'Bout Some Good News?

“States are facing their deepest spending crises in decades, and more than two dozen are looking at raising taxes or fees to balance their budgets. But at least one state, Georgia, is bucking the trend and cutting taxes.”

– *Wall Street Journal*, “Georgia Has Tax Cuts on Its Mind,” March 17, 2009

“Here in Georgia, we’re proposing a true stimulus package for a robust economy creating an economic environment that encourages opportunity, productivity and innovation. The hard-working people of Georgia – not big government – are the key to economic prosperity....

[L]eaders of the Georgia General Assembly are offering a single legislative package that acknowledges and appreciates the people of our state being the driving economic force. [The JOBS ACT] serves as a constructive solution to create an environment that makes Georgia attractive to new business startups as well as businesses seeking to expand in Georgia.”

– Senate President Pro Tempore Tommie Williams, March 20, 2009

“Instead of saddling our children and grandchildren with a trillion dollars in new spending, the Georgia Senate moved in a dramatically different direction. We are lowering taxes and reducing regulation. At a time when Georgians need help, job opportunities, and economic growth, the Georgia Legislature has created and passed a solid set of pro-growth policies that will create jobs and grow business. Together with House leadership, we listened to and delivered what the people of Georgia asked for – get the government out of the way, let the economy be free and give them room to take care of their own families. I applaud Representative Tom Graves for his leadership with this bill and working together with Senate to do what’s right for Georgians and the economy. With this legislation Georgia can start the road toward economic recovery for our entire nation.”

– Senate Majority Leader Chip Rogers, Senate District 21, March 25, 2009

“I’m proud to stand with my Senate and House colleagues in presenting a true stimulus package that spends absolutely no taxpayer money and allows the market to immediately respond.... This package creates an environment that makes Georgia attractive to new business startups as well as businesses seeking to expand in Georgia. It creates an environment that encourages the creation of jobs through the removal of government imposed barriers and provides incentives for job creation by independent businesses.”

– Senator Jeff Mullis, Transportation Committee Chairman, March 20, 2009

The Jobs, Opportunity, and Business Success Act (JOBS)

H.B. 481, introduced by Representative Graves of District 12 on February 18th, waives for one year the filing fee for new businesses. It authorizes a \$500 unemployment insurance tax credit for each newly hired employee that does not receive unemployment benefits; a \$2,400 income tax credit for each eligible new-hire; refunds totaling \$186 million in state-held sales tax deposits; plus the gradual elimination of business income tax for Georgia-based corporations. It passed the House 164 – 4, March 12th and the Senate 43 – 7, March 25th, takes effect by July 1st.

H.B. 482 authorizes a referendum to eliminate the state inventory tax on all Georgia businesses. The referendum would be on the November 2010 general election ballot and, if a majority vote YES, the state inventory tax on Georgia businesses would end January 1, 2011.

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