

National Organization for Women



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The Honorable Jan Brewer
Governor of Arizona
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Brewer:

Many Arizona members of the National Organization for Women (NOW) have asked me as president of NOW to express our deepest concern regarding SB1070, a bill relating to "unlawfully present aliens". We urge you to veto this legislation. SB1070 is a vague and poorly-conceived bill that would give an unprecedented amount of power to state law enforcement authorities. Requiring police to investigate the immigration status of every person they encounter when there is "reasonable suspicion" that the individual is in the U.S. "unlawfully" offers an appalling prospect. We believe that SB1070 could engender a climate of fear by creating a 'them vs. us' mentality.

The proposed law is intended to identify "undocumented" immigrants, but in all likelihood it will unleash a witch hunt conducted along racial lines. Even though proponents have claimed that SB 1070 prohibits officers from relying on race and ethnicity, it is difficult to imagine how officers would otherwise determine whom to question. Realistically, police would have to ask *everyone* for documentation of citizenship or lawful residency in the U.S. Obviously, the demand on time and resources of law enforcement could be substantial and would deter officers from more important public safety duties. Furthermore, SB1070 might hinder effective crime investigation by making people of color reluctant to report crimes.

In particular, we are concerned about the impact of SB 1070 on immigrant women trying to escape violent relationships. Immigrant women who are victims of violence need a range of services including screening and early access to benefits, the ability to work legally, immigration status for which they may be eligible and protection from detention and deportation. By deterring immigrant women from seeking help, SB 1070 would increase the risk of violence to them and their children, often with tragic consequences.

Finally, we believe that the blurring of lines between state and federal authority that this act would produce is unconstitutional. Similar such efforts by states to create their own immigration laws have repeatedly been struck down by the courts and it seems likely that this act, if it becomes law, would be challenged. Thus, in our view, a veto of SB 1070 is in the best interests of all the people of Arizona.

Sincerely,

Terry O'Neill
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