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Around the Country

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and allowing state governments to enforce certain immigration policies. In some of those states, a positive impact is already being realized, while other states will be jumping on the bandwagon in 2008. Here are just a few examples of how states across the country are tackling their immigration problems.

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Congress and the President Punch Holes in the Fence

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FAIR Forges New Ties With State Legislators

Real immigration reform may be stuck in neutral in Washington, but all across the country state legislatures are in high gear, enacting policies that effectively combat illegal immigration at the local level. Over the past several years, FAIR has invested heavily in our grassroots activism program and in promoting sensible local enforcement policies. Our series of state cost impact studies have also provided hard evidence of the impact of mass illegal immigration on state and local governments.

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IRLI's Recommendations Included in Homeland Security's Regulations for REAL ID

When the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued its final regulations for implementing REAL ID on January 11, several critical recommendations made by FAIR's legal affiliate, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), were included in the final language.

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Talk Radio Spotlight: Steve Gill

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Talk Radio Hits the Airwaves in Iowa, Talking About Immigration

Last April, on the eve of the introduction of the Bush-Kennedy illegal alien amnesty bill, FAIR co-sponsored Hold Their Feet to the Fire, an event that brought 37 of the nation's leading talk radio programs to Washington, D.C., to focus on immigration. As a direct consequence of that event, talk radio became a major player in defeating that disastrous piece of legislation by informing the American public about what was in the bill and how they could have a voice in the debate.

As the year drew to a close, talk radio once again became the focal point of the national debate about immigration policy, as the nation's political attention was focused on Iowa. Twenty-two talk radio hosts from Iowa and around the nation came to Des Moines to discuss immigration in advance of the first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses, held on January 3.

Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row provided a forum for local and national political and community leaders to discuss immigration issues, which are at or near the top of the list of the public's concerns in Iowa and around the nation. The inclusion of a nationally syndicated program meant that Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row could be heard on 167 radio stations around the country, covering all 50 of the top media markets.

Broadcasting from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm from the Des Moines Marriott on December 27 and 28, Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row attracted many of the leading presidential contenders and drew extensive national and local media coverage. Every Democratic and Republican presidential candidate was issued an invitation to participate in person or by phone.

Over the course of the two-day event, hundreds of interviews were conducted with the candidates, their designated proxies, and other leading immigration experts. The event received live national television coverage on the Fox News Channel, which positioned a reporter and a camera crew in the ballroom that served as radio row headquarters. CNN and NBC News also sent camera crews to cover the event, as did all of the local Des Moines television stations.

The success of this event illustrates the importance of immigration as a political issue in 2008, and talk radio's ongoing commitment to providing a forum for discussion of this issue. In spite of the unusual timing of Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row the week between Christmas and New Year's leading talk radio hosts were willing to come to snowy Des Moines to fulfill a critical role in educating the public about this issue and providing a forum for Americans to speak directly to the people who want to lead this country.

FAIR Cost Study Reveals Why Immigration Is a Top Concern in Iowa

Many in the national media expressed surprise that immigration was at the top of the list of concerns among Iowa voters. However, a new report, *The Costs of Illegal Immigration to Iowans*, released by FAIR in late December, demonstrates why people in Iowa, like others around the nation, are growing increasingly alarmed about the failures of our nation's immigration policies.

The Costs of Illegal Immigration to Iowans finds that providing education and health care to illegal aliens and their dependents, and incarceration of criminal illegal aliens, carries a \$241 million annual price tag for Iowa taxpayers. The report is the latest in a series of state impact studies undertaken by FAIR, demonstrating the growing burdens of illegal immigration on the American people.

Concern about the impact of illegal immigration cuts across the political spectrum in Iowa. A Zogby International poll conducted in early December revealed that nearly 57 percent of Democrats and 79.5 percent of Republicans in the state believe that "illegal immigration depresses wages and imposes burdens on the economy."

Illegal Alien Advocacy Network Tries, and Fails, to Keep Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row Off the Air

The more the public learns about illegal immigration and the costs associated with it, the more they tend to support sensible enforcement of immigration laws. FAIR's role in educating the public about the impact of mass immigration, and the emergence of talk radio as a forum for discussing these issues, helped head-off disastrous amnesty legislation in 2007.

Thus, when the pro-amnesty lobby learned about Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row, and the release of a new FAIR report on the costs of illegal immigration in Iowa, a well-funded coalition of organizations mounted a smear campaign aimed at preventing the event from taking place.

Spearheaded by the Center for New Community, the coalition targeted the participating radio stations, urging them not to attend. In addition, they attempted to pressure the Des Moines Marriott Downtown to bar FAIR from holding a press conference at the hotel.

Not a single radio station withdrew as a result of this campaign, nor did the Des Moines Marriott respond to their pressure tactics.

In the end, the coalition attempting to muzzle free speech and subvert the First Amendment, proved to have almost no public support. In fact, many Iowans made their way to the Marriott to express their support for what talk radio is doing to provide a voice for ordinary Americans in the immigration debate, and for the work that FAIR is doing in educating the public about immigration issues.

Live from Iowa 2007, Talk Radio Row

Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row was conceived as a forum for people in Iowa and all across the country to hear America's leaders discuss their vision of U.S. immigration policy. National and local leaders were invited to appear on any or all of the talk shows broadcasting from Radio Row.

Understanding the importance of immigration policy to the American public, many officials, including presidential candidates, took advantage of the opportunity to speak directly to Iowans and talk radio listeners across the country about this issue. While invitations were extended without regard to political affiliation, only those seeking the GOP nomination chose to appear — either in person, by phone or by sending a representative.

Many other immigration experts were also featured guests on the 22 talk shows broadcasting from Radio Row, including representatives from FAIR. The event provided a comprehensive forum for the public to hear ideas about how America's broken immigration policies could be reformed to better serve the interests of the nation.

Notable Guests Appearing on Iowa 2007 Talk Radio Row

Presidential Candidates

Fred Thompson (in-person)

Ron Paul (in person)

Alan Keyes (in-person)

Duncan Hunter (by phone)

Mitt Romney (by phone)

Mike Huckabee (by phone)

Rudy Giuliani (by phone)

John McCain (by phone) <p

Other Guests Appearing on Iowa Radio Row

Congressman Steve King (R-Iowa)

Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa)

Mayor Lou Barletta, Hazleton, Pennsylvania

Dan Stein, FAIR

Julie Kirchner, FAIR

Ira Mehlman, FAIR

Jack Martin, FAIR

Peter Gadiel, 9/11 Families for a Secure America

Chris Burgard, director of the award winning documentary, Border

Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Maricopa County, Arizona

Jim Gilchrist, founder Minuteman Project

Jerome Corsi, World Net Daily

Monica Ramos, wife of jailed Border Patrol Agent Ignacio Ramos

Frank Morris, co-founder of Choose Black America </p

Media Outlets that Reported on Iowa 2007 Radio Row (partial list)

Fox News Channel

CNN

NBC News

KDSM-TV Des Moines

WHO-TV Des Moines

KCCI-TV Des Moines

KCRG-TV Cedar Rapids

KMEG-TV Sioux City

KPTH-TV Sioux City

Dallas Morning News

Wall Street Journal

Washington Times

New York Times Blog

Des Moines Register

Arizona Republic

Milwaukee Journal

USA Today On Politics

World Net Daily

Greg Knapp Show/Radio America

RedState.com

Radio Ink

Radio and Records

Around the Country

The National Conference of State Legislatures reports that 244 immigration-related bills in 46 states were approved in 2007, most of them aimed at curbing illegal immigration and allowing state governments to enforce certain immigration policies. In some of those states, a positive impact is already being realized, while other states will be jumping on the bandwagon in 2008. Here are just a few examples of how states across the country are tackling their immigration problems.

Oklahoma | In 2007, FAIR and the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI) worked closely with a group of Oklahoma lawmakers, led by State Rep. Randy Terrill, to craft sensible state immigration enforcement policies. The law, which took effect on November 1, is already showing signs of having a beneficial impact in Oklahoma. According to the Greater Tulsa Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, between 15,000 and 25,000 illegal aliens have left Tulsa County since the law went into effect. Some have moved to other parts of the country, but many have returned to their home countries. Either way, local activists who work closely with FAIR seem satisfied. “That’s more money in our pockets,” commented Carol Helm of Immigration Reform for Oklahoma Now.

Tennessee | Another state moving in the direction of enforcing immigration laws locally is Tennessee, where a state law denying or suspending business licenses to companies that knowingly hire illegal aliens took effect on January 1. The law encourages employers to use the federal E-Verify system in order to establish that they are in compliance. It also discourages employers using labor subcontractors to employ cheap illegal labor from doing an end-run around the law by holding the end user of the labor accountable.

Indiana | Looking to join the growing list of states that are cracking down on employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens, Indiana State Senator Mike Delph introduced legislation that would penalize employers caught with illegal aliens on the payroll. Under Delph’s legislation, employing illegal aliens could result in companies losing their business licenses. IFIRE, an Indiana-based grassroots immigration reform organization working closely with FAIR, has been one of the driving forces behind effective enforcement legislation in the state.

Minnesota | Gov. Tim Pawlenty kicked off the new year by unveiling a plan to crack down on the use of fraudulent documents by illegal aliens in Minnesota. The governor may also require employers in the state to use the federal E-Verify system to check the immigration status of the new employees. Going a step further, Pawlenty indicated that he will ask the Minnesota legislature to penalize local communities, such as Minneapolis and St. Paul, that have declared themselves sanctuaries for illegal aliens.

Congress and the President Punch Holes in the Fence

When it was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Bush, the bill authorizing construction of 700 miles of fencing along the southern border was supposed to be a good faith gesture of Washington's new-found seriousness about stopping illegal immigration and protecting homeland security. The intent of the security fence was to create sufficient obstacles to illegal entry to discourage people from trying and to give the Border Patrol a fighting chance to catch those who decided to try anyway.

Barely a year later the border security fence project itself is facing nearly insurmountable obstacles. On the day after Christmas, President Bush signed into law the Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 2008 that may effectively prevent any sort of meaningful security barrier from being constructed. Hidden in the comprehensive spending package is language that:

- Strips the requirement for double fencing, which would have allowed the Border Patrol to scoop up those who made it through the first line of defense. This provision was authored by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Tex.).
- Ties in knots current and future construction by requiring that a variety of federal, state and local entities be consulted before construction commences. These include the federal Departments of Agriculture and Interior; state and local governments; Indian tribes; and property owners. Also authored by Sen. Hutchison, this provision is meant "to minimize the impact on the environment, culture, commerce and quality of life for residents and communities" along the border.

Without formally killing the border security fence, the Omnibus Appropriations Bill builds in endless construction delays and undermines the effectiveness of whatever limited sections of the barrier are constructed.

FAIR has long been a proponent of fences and other effective enforcement measures along our porous and vulnerable borders. As far back as the 1980s, FAIR created models for effectively controlling the flow of illegal traffic across our borders. Moreover, in areas where fencing is in place, like San Diego, the illegal flow has been slowed to a trickle and the adverse effect to the local environment caused by mass illegal border crossing reduced.

Bill Demonstrates the Government's Bad Faith

During the 2007 debate about the Senate's so-called comprehensive immigration bill, FAIR consistently argued that the federal government cannot be trusted to fulfill any pledge to enforce immigration laws. While illegal aliens and cheap labor employers would have received immediate and irrevocable benefits from the Bush-Kennedy amnesty bill, the American public would have received nothing more than promises of future enforcement. The back door tactic of gutting the border fence through the appropriations process demonstrates once again to the American people that our government's promises to enforce immigration laws are not worth the taxpayer funded paper they're printed on.

FAIR Forges New Ties With State Legislators

Real immigration reform may be stuck in neutral in Washington, but all across the country state legislatures are in high gear, enacting policies that effectively combat illegal immigration at the local level. Over the past several years, FAIR has invested heavily in our grassroots activism program and in promoting sensible local enforcement policies. Our series of state cost impact studies have also provided hard evidence of the impact of mass illegal immigration on state and local governments.

State Legislators for Legal Immigration was established in 2007 by Pennsylvania Representative Daryl Metcalfe to help lawmakers from different states work together to solve common problems associated with illegal immigration. The establishment of this national alliance of state lawmakers working to promote effective enforcement policies that fit the needs of their own states is a clear sign that immigration enforcement has moved to the forefront in states and communities around the country.

The group has worked closely with FAIR and the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI) to develop state laws and to generate grassroots support for state enforcement efforts. On December 7, seven members of State Legislators for Legal Immigration joined with FAIR and IRLI at a press conference in Washington, D.C., broadcast on C-SPAN, to announce their goals for 2008.

The legislators spoke of the impact of illegal immigration on their states and their unwillingness to wait any longer for Congress to deal with the situation. FAIR, for its part, pledged to step up our efforts to bring about true immigration reform from the grassroots.

FAIR encourages members to find out how you can promote immigration reform in your state or community and to urge your state representatives to join State Legislators for Legal Immigration, StateLegislatorsforLegalImmigration.com.

IRLI's Recommendations Included in Homeland Security's Regulations for REAL ID

Getting a law passed by Congress is not so much the end of a long complicated process as the beginning of a new one. Every time Congress passes a law, the federal agency charged with carrying it out must write and adopt regulations for implementing it.

The REAL ID Act, approved by Congress in 2005, is intended to improve the security of vital U.S. identity documents — most notably, state-issued driver's licenses — to prevent them from being misused by terrorists or illegal aliens.

When the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued its final regulations for implementing REAL ID on January 11, several critical recommendations made by FAIR's legal affiliate, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), were included in the final language.

IRLI's recommendations for verification of Social Security numbers and immigration status of all driver's license applicants will be implemented by October 2009, while other key provisions have been delayed until 2011. The inclusion of IRLI's verification recommendations means that it will be much more difficult for people who are not legally present in the U.S. to obtain state-issued licenses or ID cards. Keeping these documents out of the hands of illegal aliens is a critical component of the strategy to reverse the flow of illegal immigration. Without these basic identity documents, illegal aliens will find it increasingly difficult to live and work in the U.S.

The inclusion and expedited implementation of these verification requirements also speaks to FAIR's and IRLI's ability to analyze and influence important immigration policies before and after congressional approval.

Talk Radio Spotlight: Steve Gill

Giving Tennesseans a Voice on Immigration

When Steve Gill talks — on more than a dozen radio stations across Tennessee people don't just listen; they act. That kind of broad and engaged audience is why Talker's Magazine has twice named Steve one of the 100 most influential talk radio hosts in the nation, and why Business Tennessee has named him one of the 100 most powerful people in the Volunteer State for three consecutive years.

When Steve Gill talks these days, it is often about immigration — an issue that his listeners are passionate about. Broadcasting from the Hold Their Feet to the Fire radio row organized by FAIR in April 2007, Steve's audience played an important role in moving both of Tennessee's senators to oppose the measure. And Steve has been keeping the pressure on politicians in Tennessee and elsewhere by being part of the Iowa 2007 Radio Row.

"We participated in the FAIR radio row in Washington, D.C., last spring that was instrumental in alerting voters across the nation to the details contained in the amnesty deal that fell apart under scrutiny. Numerous polls reveal that illegal immigration is a top concern for voters in virtually every state. American voters on both sides of the aisle want our borders secured and want our laws enforced with respect to those who come here illegally, stay here illegally and work here.

A lawyer by training, Steve served in the administrations of President George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He is a regular columnist for a string of newspapers across Tennessee and political commentator on the ABC-TV affiliate in Nashville. In addition to taking his program on the road to bring immigration issues directly to his listeners, The Steve Gill show has aired live from Baghdad, Fallujah, Israel and other global hot spots.

Reformer Corner: Noella Oberlin

An Immigrant Turned Immigration Reform Activist

Proving that sometimes we do need immigrants to get jobs done in America, Noella Oberlin, an immigrant from New Zealand, has emerged as one of the leaders of the immigration reform movement in her adopted state of Tennessee.

Noella has recently formed Tennessee Federation for Immigration Reform and Enforcement (TFIRE), inspired by her own immigrant experience and her anger over millions of illegal aliens demanding to be rewarded for breaking the law.

But even before founding TFIRE, Noella waged a sometimes lonely campaign to ensure that the immigration laws that she — and millions of other proud Americans followed in order to become citizens of this country — were upheld by federal, state and local government officials.

Noella has fought hard in Tennessee to win approval of tough state enforcement measures, similar to those passed in other states, by meeting with lawmakers in Nashville, the state capital. Twice, the Tennessee legislature passed state-based enforcement measures, only to see them vetoed by Gov. Phil Bredeson. Undeterred, Noella and TFIRE will be back this year to rally public support for a state bill modeled after Arizona's Proposition 200.

Noella came to the United States in 1971. A U.S. Air Force veteran, she proudly wore her uniform as she became a citizen in 1975. Like millions of other Americans native born and legal immigrants she watched in dismay as law-abiding, hard-working people lost jobs as a result of illegal immigration while government officials turned a blind eye to countless abuses of our immigration system.

Together with others in Tennessee and across the nation, Noella is determined to make a difference in this important struggle for true immigration reform. Proving that sometimes we do need immigrants to get jobs done in America, Noella Oberlin, an immigrant from New Zealand, has emerged as one of the leaders of the immigration reform movement in her adopted state of Tennessee.