

The Social Contract

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A Note from the Editor

Immigration Reform from the Grassroots

As we were going to press, the Supreme Court agreed to rule on Arizona's SB-1070 law, intended to deal with problems associated with illegal aliens. Arizona wants the justices to allow the state to begin enforcing measures that have been blocked by lower courts at the Obama Administration's request.

Georgia, Indiana, and South Carolina have joined Arizona in this litigation. The states argue that the federal government isn't doing enough to protect the American public from illegal aliens. Arizona is a gateway for illegals, but the problems they cause are no longer confined to border states.

Gridlock in Congress and the unwillingness of the executive branch to enforce immigration laws have forced states to act. Communities and states suffer the consequences of refusal to deal with these issues at the federal level. Public benefits for illegal aliens, including housing, education for their children, and health care, along with public safety concerns, are costs borne by local and state taxpayers. The public is right in demanding state-based immigration enforcement, since the federal government has so utterly failed.

In this issue we review what happened in California in the early 1990s, when the Save Our State (SOS) campaign led to the successful ballot initiative, Proposition 187. This provided for citizenship screening to try to prohibit illegal aliens from gaining access to social services non-Californians were not entitled to. This was the first time that a state passed legislation relating to immigration since the federal government claimed control of these matters in the late nineteenth century.

Prop. 187, and the recent initiatives that have been enacted, would not have come about without local and state action by concerned citizens. They are the ones who have forced governors and state legislators to press for tough new immigration laws. As long as Congress and federal agencies fail to act, immigration reform will have to come at the state level. ■

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D.