

# Hiring Illegal Workers



June 18, 2007

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● The next issue of  
 ● Capitol Journal will be  
 ● available on July 2nd.  
 ●

## Top Story

*Frustrated with a lack of federal action against employers that hire illegal workers, states have started imposing their own sanctions against companies that don't follow the rules. But some question whether those measures go too far.*

## SNCJ Spotlight

### States taking illegal immigration battle to employers

**W**ith Congress and the White House in seemingly endless gridlock over immigration reform, frustrated states have clearly taken the lead on dealing with what has become one of the nation's major hot button issues. Over 1,400 immigration-related bills have been introduced in statehouses this year, far more than double the 570 put into play in 2006. While those bills cover a wide range of issues, lawmakers are noticeably becoming more inclined to hold employers responsible for weeding out illegal workers.



According to the State Net database, 225 of the immigration bills introduced in statehouses as of June 1 this year deal with employment, the largest number of any specific immigration issue. That continues a trend that began last year when, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), at least 107 such measures were introduced across 41 states.

According to NCSL, 10 states eventually adopted employment-based immigration laws in 2006. Several, including IDAHO, KANSAS, MISSOURI, WASHINGTON and OKLAHOMA, enacted worker-based proposals that deny unemployment and other work-related benefits to undocumented employees. Meanwhile, COLORADO, GEORGIA, LOUISIANA, PENNSYLVANIA and TENNESSEE adopted employer-based laws that require business owners to verify that their employees are legally able to work inside our borders, usually by checking their status through a federal database known as the Basic Pilot Program. In at least one state, COLORADO, businesses that fail to do so face fines, losing government

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contracts or even the loss of their business license. ARIZONA lawmakers approved a similar measure — HB 2577 — but Gov. Janet Napolitano (D) vetoed it.

but with changes in the Senate. Pearce says that should a joint legislative committee not be able to work out the differences to his satisfaction, or if the governor vetoes the measure again, he is prepared to take the measure before voters via a referendum next November.

“Illegal immigration has been a Katrina-like failure at all levels of government — state, federal and local,” he says. “Employers who hire illegals need to be gone after harshly, and when they knowingly hire an illegal immigrant they ought to lose their license and go to jail. Enough’s enough.”

Napolitano’s veto has not deterred Rep. Russell Pearce (R), who co-authored the 2006 legislation. Pearce introduced a similar bill this year, HB 2779, which would give businesses that knowingly hire illegal workers two choices — fire those workers or lose their business license. It has been approved by both chambers,

## The week in session

**States in Regular Session:** CA, DC, DE, IL, LA, MA, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, US, WI

**States Currently Prefiling or Drafting for 2008:** FL, KY

**States Projected to Adjourn:** AZ, ME

**States Adjourned in 2007:** AK, AL, AR, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, MD, MN, MS, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, WV, WY

**State Special Sessions Adjourned in 2007:** AL “a”, FL “a”, FL “b”, MS “a”, MT “a”, NM “a”, WI “a”, WV “a”

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(session information current as of 06/15/2007)  
Source: State Net database

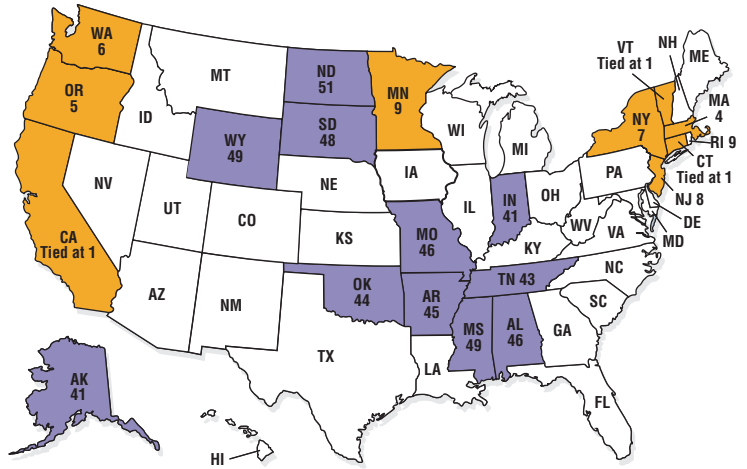
Last week, TENNESSEE lawmakers also approved legislation that would suspend the business license of any company that knowingly hires illegal workers. That measure is now with Gov. Phil Bredesen (D), who has not said if he will sign it. Other employer-sanction legislation has already been signed into law this year. Under WEST VIRGINIA Senate Bill 70, for instance, employers could face fines and even jail time for repeatedly hiring illegal workers. In OKLAHOMA, HB 1804 not only denies undocumented aliens public benefits like welfare and allows police to detain illegals, it also exposes Sooner State employers to state fines and civil liability for employing undocumented workers in lieu of legal residents.

The lawmakers behind these measures say they are necessary because the federal government has been lax in both securing the borders and enforcing the 1986 federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which forbids employers from knowingly hiring illegal workers.

Although the federal government has ramped up its IRCA enforcement efforts of late, there was a clear period of time from 1999-2003 where just the opposite was the case. Then — under big time pressure from both the business lobby and pro-immigration groups — that effort went almost literally to zero. It also did not help that the federal agency then responsible for enforcing IRCA, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, was folded into the Department of Homeland Security, which during that time was consolidating its resources to deal with terrorism.

The result was that federal prosecutions for hiring illegals went from 182 in 1999 to just four in 2003. And while the feds levied fines against 417 companies in 1999,

## Bird's eye view

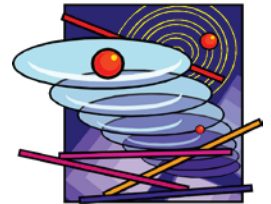


Source: American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy

Orange Top 10 energy efficient states Purple Bottom 10 energy efficient states

### Some states more energy efficient than others

When it comes to developing policies that promote energy efficiency, some states are simply way ahead of others. So says a recent study conducted by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE), a nonpartisan research group based in Washington. The study, which was funded by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, ranks states based on their performance in eight categories, including building energy codes, transportation policies and how much they spend on energy efficiency programs. According to ACEEE, three states — VERMONT, CONNECTICUT and CALIFORNIA — share top billing for their efforts, while NORTH DAKOTA ranks as the least energy efficient in the nation. The report also noted that more than half of the states “seriously lag behind” the leaders. But those states can also take solace in one thing — states still spend about three times as much on energy efficiency as does the federal government.





that figure dropped to only three in 2004. And even though the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement(ICE) agency, which now regulates IRCA, has recently launched several major new efforts to crack down on illegal hiring, frustrated state lawmakers contend it is not nearly enough.

“We’re stepping up to the plate because the federal government won’t,” says OKLAHOMA Rep. Randy Terrill (R), the driving force behind HB 1804. “The federal government is absolutely, utterly failing to protect our borders.”

“The bottom line is that illegal immigrants will not come to OKLAHOMA if there are no jobs waiting for them here” Terrill adds. “They will not stay here if there is no government subsidy to do so, and they certainly won’t stay here if they know law enforcement can detain them until they are deported. HB 1804 does all of that.”

But critics contend these proposals ignore one major issue — under IRCA fining employers for hiring violations is still a matter for the federal government, not the states.

“All of these employer-sanction laws coming up in the states are clearly pre-empted by federal law,” says Tyler Moran, a policy analyst with the

National Immigration Law Center, a Washington D.C.-based group that advocates for immigrant rights. “We believe that most of these statutes will not hold up in court.”

Moran also contends that, regardless of anything else, states are not equipped to handle enforcing these measures. “Immigration law is very complex,” she says. “States are not immigration experts, and we should not be turning government workers into immigration police.”

But ARIZONA’s Pearce vehemently disagrees, contending that states have always had “joint authority” over immigration control with the feds. “States have an inherent ability — and a responsibility — to enforce immigration laws,” Pearce says. OKLAHOMA’s Terrill also believes his measure is well within legal boundaries, calling it “airtight.”

Pearce and Terrill, along with anti-immigration groups like the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), also cite the cost to states of dealing with illegal immigration as ample justification for taking their own actions. “When you add up incarceration, education and healthcare, there is a \$200 million annual direct cost of illegal immigration in this state, with an indirect cost that is probably three times that,” Terrill says. FAIR estimates that the education costs alone for the nation’s illegal immigrants runs more than \$12 billion each year.

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But even so, there is not consensus on whether illegal immigrants ultimately hurt or help the U.S. economy. For instance, a 2005 report from the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) determined that illegal immigrants contribute around \$8.5 billion in taxes to the Social Security and Medicare funds each year, and that those workers paid almost \$50 billion in federal taxes from 1996 to 2003.

Another recent report from TEXAS comptroller Carol Keeton Strayhorn estimated that “the absence of the estimated 1.4 million undocumented immigrants in TEXAS in fiscal 2005 would have been a loss to our Gross State Product of \$17.7 billion.” Strayhorn also estimated that illegal immigrants paid approximately \$427 million more in taxes to the state than they cost in government services.

But Strayhorn’s report also notes another key aspect of the immigration battle – illegal immigrants are a ready supply of cheap labor. According to the report, losing illegal immigrant labor would decrease the TEXAS labor force by 6.3 percent, leading to a tightening of labor markets and subsequently higher wages for all workers. While that is generally a good thing, the report notes it would also lead to higher prices for TEXAS goods and a subsequent decline in the value of

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TEXAS exports. In addition, it says, “eliminating 1.4 million immigrants would have resulted in a 2.3 percent decline in employment, a 2.6 percent decline in personal income and a 2.8 percent decline in disposable personal income.”

But ARIZONA Rep. Pearce says that allowing illegals to work here just to ensure enough cheap labor is “thinking that comes directly from the far-right business oligarchy. That is the same argument used to fight the abolition of slavery and it is preposterous.”

The NILC’s Moran agrees, saying that allowing unscrupulous employers to suppress wages also helps to lock many people out of reaching the middle class, which ultimately hurts the entire economy. “We all benefit if these employers were required to pay the prevailing wage,” she says.

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## Upcoming elections

06/14/2007 - 07/05/2007

06/19/2007

### **Georgia Special Election**

US House (House Congressional District 10)

Senate District 24

06/26/2007

### **California Special Primary**

US House (House Congressional District 37)

### **Florida Special Election**

House District 24

Senate District 3

### **Massachusetts Special Election**

Senate 1st Suffolk and Middlesex District



Enita Elphick, a business owner in Yuba City, CALIFORNIA, a small farming town an hour north of the state capital of Sacramento, sees merit in both sides of the immigration debate. Because CALIFORNIA is one of a handful of states already using the Basic Pilot Program, Elphick, who operates a specialty lumber business that draws much of its 120-person workforce from the area’s heavily Hispanic population, is familiar with using it to verify that her hires are legal. She is strongly in favor of companies hiring only verifiably legal workers, although for her it is as much a matter of right and wrong as economics. “Illegal workers are subject to all kinds of abuse without being able to do anything about it. They live a life of fear and that is wrong,” she says.

**“Most employers want to do the right thing, but we can’t and shouldn’t have to be the police.”**

But she also contends that employers everywhere are becoming increasingly caught up in what has become a game of political football. Elphick says “most employers want to do the right thing, but we can’t and shouldn’t have to be the police.” She says she favors an expanded work-permit system that includes better tracking and identification processes that allow the employer and workers alike to feel secure they are within the law while also ensuring that workers are not unfairly taken advantage of. In her view, the all-or-nothing mantras found on each side of the issue are hindering the process of coming up with a solution more than helping to find one.

“There has to be a middle ground here somewhere,” she says. “We have to assess what employers need as well as what is fair for the workers and then figure out how to get that. It really should not be this difficult.”

— By RICH EHISEN

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## Budget & taxes

**S TATES PUSHING FOR FEDERAL INTERNET SALES TAX:** Twenty-two states have been working together for some time on a pact known as the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement, aimed at facilitating the collection of sales taxes on Internet and catalog purchases. But a member of the group’s governing board, IOWA Sen. Bill Dotzler (D), said that agreement is only a start, and that until the federal government steps in, Main Street retailers who have to charge sales taxes will always be at a disadvantage to Internet sellers who don’t. “That can make a big difference in who you buy from,” he said.

Now the federal government is stepping in. A bill has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WYOMING) — the Sales Tax Fairness and



Simplification Act (SB 2152) — that would require out-of-state retailers to charge sales taxes. “As a former small-businessman, it is important to level the playing field for all retailers — in-store, catalog and online — so an outdated rule for sales tax collection does not adversely impact small businesses and Main Street retailers,” Enzi said at a committee hearing on the bill last month.

**“The issue has more legs than it’s had in the past”**

Director of federal relations for the National Governors Association, David Quam, said the bill comes at a time when concern about the issue is growing and there’s a new majority in Congress that may be more amenable to doing something about it. “The issue has more legs than it’s had in the past,” he said.

The bill certainly won’t go unopposed, however. The National Taxpayers Union, for instance, issued a press release last month with the headline, “Keep the tax man off the Internet.” (QUAD-CITY TIMES)

**CA TRIES SELLING BONDS ONLINE:** CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) got the state’s voters to approve \$42.7 billion in bonds last November. Now Treasurer Bill Lockyer is trying to get those voters to invest in them.

Last week, Lockyer’s office kicked off a \$250,000 radio and print advertising campaign promoting a new website, [www.BuyCaliforniaBonds.com](http://www.BuyCaliforniaBonds.com), the first state-run site in the country designed to help residents buy bonds from online brokerage firms. “Voters adopted these bond proposals, and now we are giving them a chance to actively participate in the next phase of rebuilding CALIFORNIA, Lockyer said.

One potential benefit of having more individual investors, according to David Hitchcock, a credit analyst at Standard & Poor’s, is that “Some people feel there’s less volatility because individuals tend to buy and hold.” Lockyer hopes that having more investors will also reduce the state’s financing costs, enough to cover the \$250,000 spent on advertising and then some.

It will be a while before that is known. But there were early indications that the marketing campaign, at least, was working. The Web site drew 5,000 hits on the first day the ads began. (SACRAMENTO BEE)

**BUDGETS IN BRIEF: MICHIGAN** Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D) and legislative leaders reached an agreement last week on a plan to overhaul the state’s business tax system. The plan would replace the state’s existing Single-Business Tax with a new tax that would generate the same amount of revenue — roughly \$1.9 billion a year — while cutting taxes for about three-fourths of current payers. That feat would be accomplished by increasing taxes on insurance companies and businesses based in other states, along with taxing small business subsidiaries that currently are not taxed (DETROIT FREE PRESS). • **FLORIDA** has become the first state in the nation to legislatively prohibit the investment of its pension-fund dollars



in Iran and Sudan. Other states have barred pension fund investment in Sudan and some have general restrictions on such investments, but the Sunshine State is the first to prohibit investment in both countries by law (ORLANDO SENTINEL). • **MAINE** voters approved \$131 million in bonds for transportation and water projects last Tuesday, the only statewide issues on the ballot (PORTLAND PRESS HERALD). • **NEW JERSEY** Gov. Jon Corzine (D) and lawmakers reached agreement on a state budget nearly three weeks before the July 1 constitutional deadline. The \$33.6 billion spending plan includes no new taxes for the first time in five years and a 20 percent property-tax rebate for most homeowners (PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

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## Politics & leadership

**S**TATEHOUSES SHIFT LEFT: As a result of last November’s elections, Democrats began the year with control of six more governors’ offices — 28 instead of 22 — and four more statehouses — 23 versus 18 — than in 2006. The Dems also increased the number of states where they hold sway over both the executive and legislative branch from 8 to 15, while the number of states in GOP control dipped from 12 to 10. Some of the more notable policy decisions so far this year reflect that post-election shift.

In NEW HAMPSHIRE, for example, where the Democrats took control of the executive and legislative branches for the first time since the Civil War era, lawmakers passed legislation granting same-sex couples who enter into civil unions the same rights as those enjoyed by married heterosexual couples. The state also repealed its strictest-in-the-nation parental-notification law for underage girls seeking abortions.

MARYLAND’s new Democratic governor, Martin O’Malley, signed off on the nation’s first “living wage” law — requiring state contractors to pay their employees \$8.50 to \$11.30 per hour — something O’Malley’s Republican predecessor, Gov. Robert Ehrlich Jr. had refused to do.

VERMONT’s Democrat-controlled Legislature became the first to pass a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. And CALIFORNIA’s Democrat-led Legislature could become the first to ask voters to do the same, if the Assembly approves a ballot measure passed by the Senate this month.

But it isn’t just the Democrats who have been grabbing headlines. MONTANA and OKLAHOMA — states with divided control of their governments — are among those that have garnered attention for refusing to comply with the 2005 Real ID Act. Another split-government state, MINNESOTA, set some of the highest renewable energy goals in the country aimed at curbing global warming. FLORIDA lawmakers, meanwhile, are currently in special session, working on the nation’s most ambitious



property-tax plan. And, of course, TEXAS Gov. Rick Perry (R) touched off a national debate earlier this year when he issued an executive order mandating that schoolgirls be vaccinated against HPV, although that action was later countermanded by the state's GOP-controlled Legislature. (STATELINE.ORG)

**FL DEMS SNUB NATIONAL PARTY**

**ON PRIMARY:** Last month FLORIDA's GOP-controlled Legislature set the date for the state's presidential primary for Jan. 29, in violation of national party rules barring all but a select group of states from holding their primaries before Feb. 5. FLORIDA's Democratic Party added insult to that injury last week when it declared that it would make the results of the renegade primary binding.

Party officials had been considering making the results nonbinding and holding caucuses at a later date but decided that would give voters the impression the Party

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was disenfranchising them. “FLORIDA has been in a situation in the past where votes have been taken away from the people,” said U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FLORIDA). But Sunshine State voters may end up being disenfranchised

anyway. The Democratic National Committee, which — along with its Republican counterpart — has already pledged to strip FLORIDA of half its delegates to the national nominating convention for holding its primary on Jan. 29, is threatening to deny the state's remaining delegates to any candidate who campaigns there. “Their primary essentially won't count,” said DNC chairman Howard Dean. “Anybody who campaigns in FLORIDA is ineligible for delegates.” (NEW YORK TIMES, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES)

**CONSERVATIVES WIN AT VA POLLS:**

Several moderate Republican VIRGINIA legislators — including Senate Transportation Committee chairman Martin E. Williams — were defeated by conservative challengers in primary races held across the state last Tuesday. Conservatives had targeted the incumbents for voting with Democrats to raise taxes. “The people have spoken.... It's time to stop raising taxes in VIRGINIA,” said Robin DeJarnette, executive director of the VIRGINIA Conservative Action PAC. But some believe the conservative victories

**In the hopper**

At any given time, State Net tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states, the US Congress and the District of Columbia. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

**Number of prefiles last week: 197**

**Number of Intros last week: 1,100**

**Number of bills enacted/adopted last week: 1,071**

**Number of prefiles to date: 34,322**

**Number of Intros to date: 143,993**

**Number of enacted/adopted overall to date: 28,912**

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(measures current as of 06/14/2007)  
Source: State Net database

could actually help the Democrats in the general election by allowing them to portray their opponents as far right of mainstream Virginians. Retiring Sen. H. Russell Potts (R) demonstrated for the Dems just how that's done when he referred to the woman who won the GOP primary for his seat, Jill Holtzman Vogel, as "to the right of Attila the Hun and way out of the mainstream." Chairwoman of the Senate Democratic Caucus Mary Margaret Whipple seems to think that sort of approach will actually enable the Democrats to overcome the Republicans' 23-17 majority in her chamber. "I really think we will have the Democratic majority come November," she said. (WASHINGTON POST)

**POLITICS IN BRIEF:** The IDAHO Legislature is the star of a documentary that aired last week on PBS. The 3.5-hour film, entitled "State Legislature," offers an in-depth look at the legislative process, featuring the public debate and behind-the-scenes discussions that took place during the Gem State's 2004 session (STATELINE.ORG).

— Compiled by KOREY CLARK

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# Governors

**G**OVNS SEE GREEN IN BEING GREEN: A host of the world's top scientists warned governors at last week's annual meeting of the Western Governor's Association that left unchecked, global warming could eventually have catastrophic effects on their states. Scientists told governors from 10 western states that recent increases in the Earth's temperature are a direct result

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of greenhouses gases emitted by automobiles and coal- and gas-fired power plants. If that trend continues, they say, even if by only a few degrees, it could cause significant flooding in coastal cities as well as deadly urban heat waves, severe droughts, and possibly even the onslaught of tropical diseases like malaria.

That possibility creates a significant dilemma for current

governors, said Christopher Field, director of global ecology at the Carnegie Institution of Washington. "In 2007, we have to design an energy system for 2050 to 2100," he said. "That will require incentives and leadership."



But several governors acknowledged they are also struggling to balance the need to address global warming with continuing to meet rapidly growing state energy demands. “We are not going to reduce the growth of need in energy and we need to understand the economics of it,” said WYOMING Gov. Dave. Freudenthal (D), who pushed scientists to assure them that the data on climate change is accurate. “It is important we move aggressively on this. But whenever we would push [energy experts about] how much will it cost and how soon it can be done, the discussion became less precise.”

Governors also continued to call for greater action at the federal level, unanimously supporting a resolution by UTAH Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. (R) urging the federal government for money and flexibility to move ahead on a spectrum of energy technologies, particularly in regard to cleaner burning coal processes that pump resulting greenhouse gasses underground. The governors want federal funding for reducing coal pollution that has for decades been focused on the East to make its way to Western states, which have vast coal reserves as well as the subterranean geology to hold underground emissions.

Several governors openly questioned whether the federal government is ready to invest those dollars.

But governors also heard another, slightly more positive message from a collection of alternative energy leaders and venture capitalists: as great as the threat global climate change poses, there is what one called “a staggering business opportunity”

for western states to develop solutions for dealing with it. Venture capitalist Ray Lane predicted that the opportunities for he and his colleagues in the West will dwarf those of CALIFORNIA’s Silicon Valley during the initial rise of the computer and the creation of the Internet, with one significant caveat — they will expect all levels of government to be a full partner. “Without policy changes and incentives, we will take too long to bring these technologies to commercial scale,” Lane warned.

Huntsman agreed, noting that “Entrepreneurial business opportunities will be created through this. I can’t think of another time in recent history that we have stood at the doorstep of such opportunity.” (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, CASPER STAR TRIBUNE)

**“Entrepreneurial business opportunities will be created through this. I can’t think of another time in recent history that we have stood at the doorstep of such opportunity.”**

**SCHWARZENEGGER TO LATINOS — AVOID SPANISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA:** CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) said Latino immigrants should avoid Spanish-language media in order to more quickly learn English and assimilate into American culture. Speaking to the annual meeting of the National



Association of Hispanic Journalists, Schwarzenegger, an Austrian immigrant, said that Spanish-speaking immigrants need to “turn off the Spanish television set. It’s that simple. You’ve got to learn English. I know this sounds odd and this is the politically incorrect thing to say and I’m going to get myself in trouble. But I know that when I came to this country, I very rarely spoke German to anyone.” At least one participant seemed

**“You’ve got to learn English. I know this sounds odd and this is the politically incorrect thing to say and I’m going to get myself in trouble. But I know that when I came to this country, I very rarely spoke German to anyone.”**

angered by the governor’s comments. “Spanish media is there to do what the English media doesn’t do, which is to serve the immigrants,” said Pilar Marrero, political editor of Spanish-language newspaper La Opinión. (SACRAMENTO BEE)

**GOVERNORS IN BRIEF:**  
Saying he has given it “a hard look,” **NEW YORK** Gov. Eliot Spitzer (D) said he is now open to the legalization of marijuana for medicinal use in the Empire State. Spitzer opposed medical marijuana use during his election campaign (NEW YORK TIMES). • **CONNECTICUT** Gov. M. Jodi Rell (R) continued to decline to say whether she will sign her state’s pending measure to allow certain chronically and terminally ill people to grow and smoke marijuana. Rell says she won’t decide until she sees the full legislation (THE DAY [NEW LONDON]). • **OHIO** Gov. Ted Strickland (D) said he will veto a bill under consideration in the Buckeye State Legislature that would allow betting on previously run horse races. Strickland also wants lawmakers to produce legislation to eliminate cash payouts on so-called games of skill (DAYTON DAILY NEWS). • **TEXAS** Gov. Rick Perry (R) signed legislation to place a referendum before voters next November that would authorize the Lone Star State to sell \$3 billion in bonds to fund building one of the largest cancer research centers in the nation. The proposed Cancer Prevention and Research Institute would allocate dollars to medical research initiatives across the state to find a cure (DALLAS MORNING NEWS). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) said that that a lawsuit to force the federal government to permit the Golden State to move forward with its new vehicle emissions standards is now “inevitable.” Attorney General Jerry Brown (D) has already said the state will file suit in October against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency unless it issues a Clean Air Act waiver allowing **CALIFORNIA** to force new cars and light trucks to meet stricter emissions standards than federal law requires (SACRAMENTO BEE).

## Upcoming stories

Here are some of the topics you will see covered in upcoming issues of the State Net Capitol Journal:

- **Payday loans**
- **Credit scoring**
- **Medical marijuana**





up to three years in jail and a \$25,000 fine. It moves to Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) for review (JOURNAL REGISTER [SPRINGFIELD]). • **SOUTH DAKOTA** corrections officials adopt new execution rules that will allow the Coyote State to carry out its first death sentence in 60 years. The new protocol adds a third drug to the lethal injection mix used to perform the execution (ARGUS LEADER).

## Correction

In the Spotlight section of our June 11 issue, we noted that Gopher State lawmakers had approved funding for a new stadium for the MINNESOTA Twins baseball team. Actually, lawmakers approved allowing Hennepin County to raise its sales tax to help fund that facility. We regret the error.

**EDUCATION:** The **OREGON** Senate approves HB 3270, which would limit a school’s authority to censor high school and college student journalists. The measure would still allow school officials to edit material that was libelous, slanderous or an “unwarranted invasion of privacy.” It moves to Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) for review (OREGONIAN [PORTLAND]). • **NEVADA** Gov. Jim Gibbons (R) signs AB 212, which raises the Silver State’s compulsory age for attending school from 17 to 18 (REVIEW-JOURNAL [LAS VEGAS]).

**ENVIRONMENT:** The presidents and chancellors of 284 colleges and universities nationwide sign an agreement to combat global warming by working to make their campuses “carbon neutral.” Institutions signing the pledge agreed to carry out short-term strategies to conserve energy and reduce emissions while they develop long-term plans to convert their facilities so that they will no longer produce greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **NEW HAMPSHIRE** Gov. John Lynch (D) signs legislation that bans the burning of toxic construction and demolition debris. It takes effect on January 1, 2008 (FOSTER’S DAILY DEMOCRAT [DOVER]). • The **CALIFORNIA** Assembly approves AB 118, which would raise state vehicle fees in order to fund alternative fuel research and to provide subsidies to consumers to buy alternative fuel vehicles. It moves to the Senate (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE).

**HEALTH & SCIENCE:** **VERMONT** Gov. James Douglas (R) signs a bill that restricts “data mining” operations that gather information on what prescription drugs doctors dispense, which is then used by pharmaceutical makers for marketing purposes. The measure does allow doctors to opt-in to the data mining system if they so choose (RUTLAND HERALD). • **NEVADA** Gov. Jim Gibbons (R) signs AB 148, which bars convenience stores from selling cold remedies and decongestants that contain pseudoephedrine, which can be used in the manufacture of illegal methamphetamine. Those medications may now be sold only at pharmacies (REVIEW-JOURNAL [LAS VEGAS]).





break into locked cars to free dogs and cats suffering in the heat or cold (REVIEW-JOURNAL [LAS VEGAS]). • The OREGON House approves SB 694, legislation that makes it a crime to keep pregnant pigs confined for more than 12 hours in a day inside crates too small to turn around. It moves to Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) for review (OREGONIAN [PORTLAND]).

— Compiled by RICH EHISEN

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# Once around the statehouse lightly

**D**O OVER? When the ARIZONA Legislature recently approved a bill that requires anyone convicted of a drunk-driving offense to install an ignition interlock device on their car, the vote was nearly unanimous in both chambers. But the *Arizona Republic* reports that less than a month later, many of the same lawmakers who voted for the measure have offered up an amendment to repeal it. Republican Rep. John Kavanaugh says he sponsored the amendment after receiving new information about the interlock devices, which are meant to keep a sodden driver from starting the vehicle. But other reasons also abound. One lawmaker complained that the law discriminates against women, who she says get drunk easier than men. Another contends that it is unfair to motorcycle riders. Still another says the cost of the interlock is a hardship on low-income folks. Uh, isn't this the kind of debate that was supposed to happen before they voted on the original bill?

**REAL ROAD RAGE:** When the weather gets hot, the tempers of harried motorists soon follow. But in IOWA, frantic tailgaters and impatient horn blowers are the least of summer's roadway hazards. According to the *Quad City Times*, Hawkeye State transportation officials are now warning motorists to watch out for spontaneous pavement "blowups" — the heat-induced buckling of otherwise perfectly fine streets and highways. Although William Zitterich of the IOWA DOT says these events can be "quite violent," he also insists that such a blowup is "not something where you're going to have flying concrete in your face." That's comforting.

**NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED:** Bob Teixeira thought he was doing a good thing when he converted his 1981 diesel Mercedes to run on vegetable oil. Teixeira, a NORTH CAROLINA guitar teacher, figured that making his old clunker run on oil not imported from foreign environs was downright good for America. But wait, not so fast. As reported by the *Winstom-Salem Journal*, state tax officials recently fined Teixeira \$1,000 for not paying motor fuel taxes...a virtual impossibility



for him since his fuel comes from 5-gallon jugs of Costco soybean oil rather than a standard gas station. Officials also told him that to legally use veggie oil, he needed to first post a \$2,500 bond. The irony is that the powers that be probably would not have ever known about him if it were not for the bumper sticker his Merc sports — the one that proudly proclaims it to be “Powered by 100% vegetable oil.”

**BUT WILL THEY EAT PORK?** Sometimes, it is the simplest ideas that work best. For years, local governments have spent lots of time, money and effort trying to keep voracious plants and vines and from overtaking public areas. But these days, reports the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, many Northwest locales are turning that task over to an equally insatiable and far cheaper ally — goats. As anyone who has ever spent some quality time with a goat knows, they will eat almost anything, a trait that comes in quite handy when looking to clear gobs of perilous underbrush during fire season without using pesticides or paying for expensive human laborers. Goat-renting has even sprung up as a profitable little cottage business for farmers willing to cart their herd to wherever the weeds are too wild. As one such goatherd notes, “They are just eating machines. They suck down blackberry vines like it was spaghetti. I don’t understand it, (but) the thorns don’t bother them at all.” Makes you wonder how they’d do clearing out pork from the budget process.

— by *RICH EHISEN*



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