

## **National Employment Law Project Statement on Arizona's SB 1070 law**

A renewed sense of urgency about advancing comprehensive federal immigration reform is the only silver lining to emerge from the harsh and noxious law Arizona has adopted to target undocumented immigrants. No one disputes that our country's immigration policy is utterly dysfunctional and fails stakeholders on all sides of the issue. But Arizona's law does nothing to solve the problem; instead, it is riddled with potential for arbitrary and abusive enforcement, counterproductive in its economic impact—and just plain wrong.

This is the simple truth: Under Arizona's new law, men, women and children, the old and the young, those whose families settled in the U.S. centuries ago and others arriving more recently will, for no reasons other than skin color, accent or "the way they look," be subject to random stops, paper checks and subsequent arrests. Legal residents and citizens of color will be forced to stay home or carry papers at all times in order to avoid arrest—though none will have done anything wrong, and many will be marginalized and stigmatized by the process. Workers who lack authorization will be driven even deeper underground, exacerbating the workplace exploitation that victimizes them and millions of other workers whose wages and working conditions are depressed by this exploitation. Law enforcement officers, already stretched thin by demands to do more with less, are newly burdened with costly and unwieldy enforcement duties, and much greater difficulty in working with a vulnerable populace afraid to cooperate with the police or enlist their aid when in need of help.

Proponents have heaped a wide range of goals onto Arizona's law, but its wrongheaded solution will only make matters in the state worse. And while this excessive law may strike a welcome punitive note for a few, it stokes anger, fear and deep distress for millions across America.

It is a sad moment in our nation's history that one of our states has taken this deplorable step in the direction of race-baiting and hatred. SB 1070 offends our shared values, humanity and sense of justice. In the words of Pablo Alvarado of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network in his April 23<sup>rd</sup> statement on the new law, "This is about the future of our country. We are either a country of exclusion or inclusion. We are either a country where we all have the right to life, liberty, and the search for happiness, or a country where people are judged and their opportunities limited based on the color of their skin."