

January 27, 2025

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Senate President Albritton
The Florida Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

House Speaker Perez
Florida House
420 The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399



**Re: ACLU FL Written Testimony in Opposition to Special Session
Anti-Immigrant Legislation**

Dear Senate President Albritton, House Speaker Perez and members of the legislature:

The ACLU of Florida is a nonpartisan organization whose mission is to protect, defend, strengthen, and promote the constitutional rights and civil liberties of all people in Florida. On behalf of our members and supporters throughout Florida, we write in opposition to the slew of anti-immigrant bills that were filed yesterday, the day prior to the start of Special Session. Additionally, we request that this written testimony be included in the legislative record regarding these bills.

These bills are an all-out assault on immigrants (and anyone who may be perceived as an immigrant) in Florida, including U.S. Citizens. They divert significant taxpayer dollars and state resources away from the critical needs of struggling families in Florida, and they fail to make our communities safer. They instill unimaginable fear in Florida's mixed-status families, divert law enforcement's attention away from community safety needs and solving crimes, and irresponsibly exacerbate anti-immigrant sentiment. The inhumane policies in these bills harm Florida's families and our economy, criminalize hardworking Floridians, and violate people's constitutional rights, privacy, and freedoms.

Most people agree there is a need for comprehensive immigration reform, but this heavy-handed approach is cruel and misguided. Mass raids and deportations, detention camps, and other extreme measures create terror in our communities and do not make our immigration system function more effectively.

A mass deportation agenda harms our loved ones, colleagues, neighbors, and co-workers. In addition to the abject cruelty these bills pose to Florida's estimated five million immigrants, these bills are also harmful to our state for all the below reasons and more.

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Kara Gross
Legislative Director



These bills harm our economy

Florida's economy depends on our immigrant communities.

- Florida is home to nearly [five million](#) immigrants.
- There are various provisions in these bills that will dissuade U.S. Citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents, employees on work visas and student visas, and other hardworking and taxpaying individuals from wanting to live, work, and visit Florida, and this bill will negatively impact private businesses and the tourism industry.
- [Over a third](#) of the state's agricultural workers and nearly a quarter of its construction workers are immigrants.
- A [2023 report](#) found that one-third of Florida's entrepreneurs are foreign-born, the largest nationwide, resulting in over \$11 billion in state business revenue.
- By one [estimate](#), Florida's Dreamers, enrolled in, or eligible for, the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program pay \$78 million in state and local taxes in Florida annually.
- These legislative proposals targeting the immigrant community would disrupt the state's workforce and economy, divert hundreds of millions of dollars away from state needs, and result in costly litigation.

These bills harm United States citizens

These bills will cause significant harm to United States citizens, including children.

- In Florida, there are an estimated 722,000 [mixed-status families](#).
- Additionally, about [250,000 underage U.S. citizens](#) live with an undocumented parent.

Local law enforcement should not be in the business of separating families and depriving children of their parents.

These bills waste State resources

These bills would take over \$350 million dollars away from our state's resources and divert it toward supporting an inhumane, misguided and sweeping mass deportation agenda. Immigration raids that target workplaces, schools, families and communities, and places of worship are a misuse of taxpayer dollars and government resources.



This is a waste of hundreds of millions of state resources that could be better spent helping Floridians put food on their table and a roof over their heads, ensure a livable wage, address our property insurance and affordable housing crisis, and protect Floridians and their property from hurricanes and other extreme weather events.

Floridians are facing an array of challenges and need our legislature to focus on and invest in affordable housing, public education, healthcare access, and job creation in our state. Instead, they are considering bills that target people, local governments, and businesses, and only further harm communities. Separating families and deporting parents and siblings and children is not a prudent or appropriate use of state resources. The federal government is tasked with federal immigration enforcement and state resources should be reserved for policies that actually benefit Floridians and reflect the values of our state.

These bills represent government overreach

Florida prides itself on being a state that protects freedom and these bills go directly against those values. The state government should not be interfering in local policies that reflect the needs of the communities they represent. Additionally, the State should also not be imposing additional burdens on private businesses by forcing every private business licensed in the state to effectuate electronic transfers of funds out of the country to verify the citizenship of each potential sender.

This government mandate could result in significant administrative, logistical and financial burdens for private businesses. Using State legislation to target and burden immigrants, local governments, and businesses, is an abuse of power and overreach by the government.

These bills racially profile Floridians

These bills create an environment that will inevitably lead to racial and ethnic profiling of anyone perceived to be an immigrant based on the color of their skin, the accent in their voice, the neighborhoods they live in, or the restaurants and businesses they frequent.

Conclusion

Everyday Floridians are struggling and many are barely able to make ends meet -- we need our legislature to prioritize its resources toward helping and supporting Floridians and investing in education, affordable housing and homeowners insurance, healthcare, and job creation for all Floridians. These are the reforms the legislature should be prioritizing state resources toward if the goal is truly to improve the health and safety of Floridians. These proposed bills accomplish none of these.

For all the above reasons and more, we urge you to vote “No” on these dangerous bills. Please do not hesitate to contact me at kgross@aclufl.org if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Sincerely,



Kara Gross
Legislative Director &
Senior Policy Counsel

