

## Immigration

### Immigration Justice Task Force

There has been a dramatic increase in harmful anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies since 2016, forming an “invisible wall” that further marginalizes immigrant communities. Many of us Florida social workers have seen great suffering at all levels of practice as a result.

Immigrants live in fear that they will be targeted for violence, human trafficking, indefinite family separation, or deportation. Children are increasingly afraid to go to school, for fear their parents will be taken from them while they are gone. We have also witnessed food insecurity, fear of authorities and crowds, homelessness, depression, suicidality, and parentified behaviors in children. This trauma urged us to strengthen our advocacy for social change and human rights, forming an NASW-FL legislative subcommittee in mid-2019, the Immigration Justice Task Force.

### Fast Facts on Florida Immigrants

- ▶ There are approximately 4.5M foreign-born Floridians, most of whom (83%) are legal residents. Nearly half have been residents for 20+ years.
- ▶ Florida is one of five states that, collectively, are home to more than half of U.S. immigrants who are undocumented.
  - Florida’s undocumented immigrants contribute nearly \$600M annually in state and local taxes.
  - Under the Trump Administration, Florida’s arrests of undocumented immigrants without criminal records has increased over 700%, more than double the national average.
- ▶ Florida has the 6th largest population of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees, with 2k immigrants per day largely relegated to South Florida for-profit prisons.
- ▶ Florida immigrants by race/ethnicity: 57.8% Latinx, 16.5% White, 15.8% Black, 9.1% Asian, 0.8% mixed race/another race.
- ▶ The majority of Florida immigrants are aged 25-44. The next largest age group for those who arrived after 2010 is children aged 5-17.
- ▶ 81% of Florida immigrants speak a language other than English at home (i.e. Spanish, Creole).
- ▶ Top 10 Florida counties for immigrant residents (descending order): Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Collier, Orange, Lee, Polk, Broward, Manatee, and Pinellas.

### 2020 Bills to Watch

#### Verification of Employment Eligibility (SB 664 - Oppose)

- ▶ Mandates that employers use federal E-Verify system to check immigration status and report violations to authorities (e.g. ICE).
- ▶ Costly and error-prone (rejections of documented citizens); business community opposes.

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### **State Re-Entry by Certain Persons (SB 1040 - Oppose)**

- ▶ Automatically charges deported individuals who return to Florida with 3rd degree felony.
- ▶ Further criminalizes immigration, mirroring federal zero-tolerance policies.

### **Voter Registration Maintenance (SB 1200 - Oppose)**

- ▶ Accumulates monthly list of individuals identifying as non-citizens and reports names to county Supervisors of Elections.
- ▶ Could result in legal citizens being purged as relies on jury duty self-identification; propagates disproven notion of immigrant voter fraud.

### **Heat Illness Prevention (SB 882/HB 513 - Support)**

- ▶ Mandates employers to provide water, shade, rest, and first aid to outdoor workers; educates employers on signs of heat stress.
- ▶ These provisions currently suggested in state law, not required.

### **Financial Aid Equity (SB 188/HB 693 - Support)**

- ▶ Extends state need- and merit-based aid eligibility (e.g. Bright Futures Scholarship) to undocumented immigrants who currently qualify for in-state tuition.
- ▶ Florida began granting in-state tuition for select undocumented students in 2014.

### **Repeal of Sanctuary Cities Ban (SB 168/HB 6023 - Support); Prohibits ICE Compliance (HB 173 - Support)**

- ▶ Repeals 2019 law that compels Florida entities to detain individuals for federal immigration (i.e. ICE); prohibits future cooperation without judicial warrant.
- ▶ Some law enforcement opposed SB 168; numerous state lawsuits pending.

### **English Language Learner (ELL) Exemption (SB 376/HB 143 - Support)**

- ▶ Exempts ELLs from 10<sup>th</sup> grade language arts FSA exam, currently a graduation requirement.
- ▶ Immigrants and ELL teachers want native language assessments in the future.

### **Driver Licenses ( SB 1856/HB1451 - Support)**

- ▶ Ensures all Floridians, including undocumented immigrants, have the opportunity to be trained, licensed, and insured to drive.

### **Native Language Assessment in Public Schools( SB 678/ HB 515 - Support)**

- ▶ Requires the Department of Education to adopt native language versions of the school readiness screener.

Please contact NASW-FL for sources.