

Arizona NO!

What's next for immigration reform?

Regardless of where you stand on the issue of immigration and immigration reform, everyone seems to be talking about Arizona law SB 1070, which was signed by Gov. Jan Brewer on April 23. Full implementation was blocked by a federal judge last week. Under the legislation, law enforcement officials could question a suspect's immigration status if there is "reasonable suspicion" they entered the country illegally. Many believe the law would have lead to rampant racial profiling.

Once again we see immigrants being scapegoated and blamed for all the problems in the country. Hundreds of organizations and individuals across the country condemned the law calling for actions across the country and a boycott of Arizona.

Immigration issues need to be dealt with at a federal level, rather than at the state level where we run the risk of having each state creating their own immigration laws. It's also a constitutional issue. Many of us believe this law sought to criminalize immigrants, making a bad situation even worse. It would not only burden local police with added work and controversy, it would create more distrust of the police within the community. The Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police firmly opposed the law for fiscal and public safety reasons, noting that fear of government officials will diminish the public's willingness to cooperate in criminal investigations and will "negatively affect" the ability of law enforcement agencies across the state to fulfill their many responsibilities in a "timely manner."

At least there is one thing we can all agree on: The federal government has failed to act. So was this law the real solution? Would it fix all the problems we have in this country around immigration? Some believe it would. Supporters say the "get-tough" approach is necessary because the federal government has failed to pass legislation addressing illegal immigration. But how can a law that essentially legalizes racial profiling, undercuts the Constitution and imbues local police with federal authority, take cops away from community policing and hurts the economy be good?

We do all agree that something needs to be done and it needs to be done now. For decades we have been talking about immigration and about our broken system. Somehow the folks in Washington have not been willing to come together and deal with the real issues around immigration. A lot of talk but no action. A lot of political games but no solutions.

Unfortunately while folks think about it, here in our community immigrants struggle each day. Racism and discrimination are alive and well everywhere, including Lane County. Workers are often exploited and taken advantage of and often can't do anything about it. They are often targets of dishonest landlords and at times "racial profiling" by law enforcement. Families are worried about being separated so they stay in the shadows uncertain about their future. This is not just about politics and policies; this is about the lives of real human beings who are working hard everyday to make a better life for themselves and their children, and who have and are contributing to our community and our country.

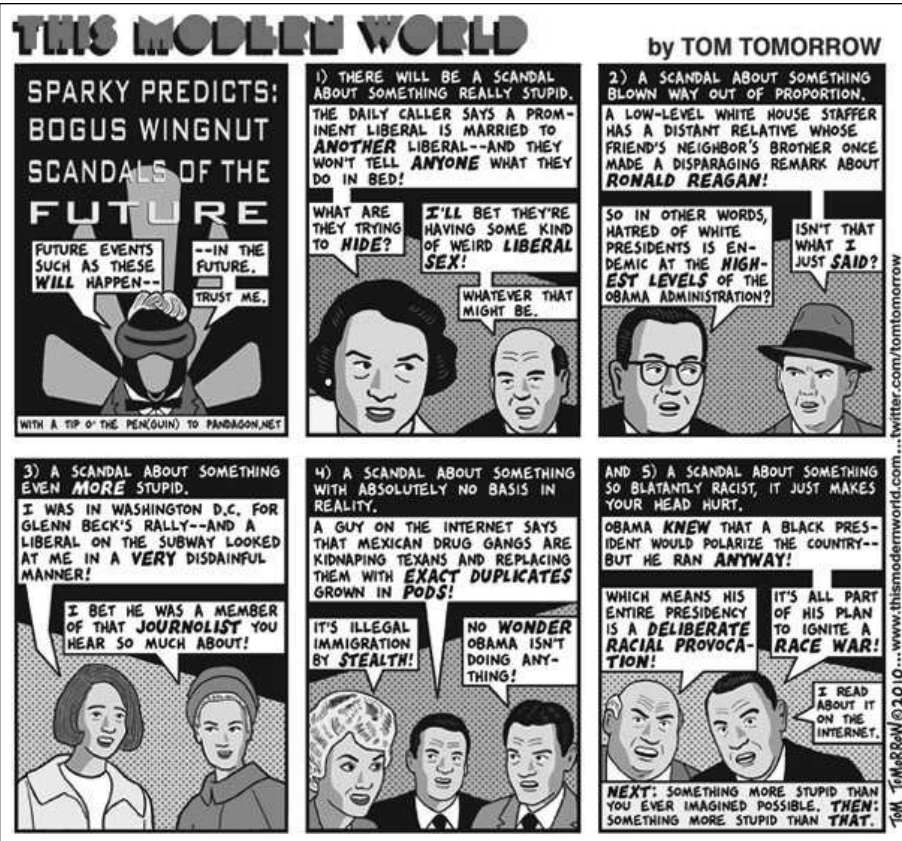
Comprehensive immigration reform is what we need. For now it looks like SB 1070 got the attention of some folks in Washington including President Obama, who recently made his first major speech on immigration. Many feel it was a good first step and many want more than a good speech.

The Department of Justice's main argument against Arizona's law is that it violates the rule of "preemption," a constitutional doctrine that says federal law takes precedence over state law. The DOJ believes enforcing immigration laws is the federal government's job.

We should also not lose sight of is the fact that immigration is rooted in our global economy and it is also playing a major role in our system of so-called "free trade." We need to look closely at our trade policies and the impact that they have on those communities, workers, families and how they force the increase in migration.

So what is next? Fixing our broken immigration system is long overdue. Can folks in Washington put aside their political games to deal with our outdated and broken immigration laws? Immigration reform needs to be comprehensive and workable. It needs to address all of the critical areas and issues. We call on the support of all of our Oregon representatives, especially Congressman Peter DeFazio to help move immigration reform forward. If not, then Arizona is only the beginning.

Qué Pasa is a monthly column featuring the opinions of Lane County's Hispanic community. Guadalupe Quinn is the Immigrant Rights Advocacy Program with Amigos Multicultural Services Center.



Letters TO THE EDITOR

VIOLATING LIBERTIES

Dear Mayor Piercy and members of the City Council: I am writing to express my disapproval of the current implementation of the downtown exclusion zone. I have no qualms when such a restriction is the result of a conviction; however, basing an exclusion order only on a citation or arrest violates the due process rights of a defendant. Before such a sanction is imposed, the defendant must have an opportunity to appear before a judge on the original allegations.

Essentially, the downtown exclusion ordinance permits law enforcement officials to bypass the judicial system. While this might be appropriate under some emergency situations, the crimes enumerated in the ordinance do not rise to the level of threats to public safety that would justify this extrajudicial sanction.

In addition, law enforcement officers in Eugene have sought to extend their powers into the realm reserved for the legislative branch as well. The no-tolerance policy for the "Alley of Evil" was never approved by the City Council. Similarly, the "No Standing" areas at the LTD station should have been vetted by the City Council in a public meeting before being implemented.

In these and many other areas, the executive branch of our city government has repeatedly overstepped its bounds. If you have any doubt about this, review the current state of external oversight of the police department that was twice voted for by an overwhelming majority of the electorate. The office of the police auditor has essentially been subsumed into the executive branch. How this can be characterized as "independent" is beyond me.

Separation of powers has been the keystone to maintaining freedom in the face of an all-too-powerful government. We cannot permit these violations of individual liberties to continue at any level of government, municipal or otherwise.

Michael L. Quillin
Eugene

DROPPED THE BALL

How is it that an artist the stature of Jackson Browne comes to town and all *EW* has to say is a tiny photo (7/22) with a cutesy caption? I mean, this guy is a first ballot Rock and Roll Hall of Famer who was named by *Rolling Stone* as "the preeminent rock lyricist of the 1970s," and whose work since then has been continually powerful and eloquent. Not to mention that he is the proverbial doer of good deeds and provider of benefit concerts for progressive causes, who has taken courageous political and environmental stands that certainly have cost him some of his fan base and plenty of Benjamins over the years.

I think you got scooped by *The Register-Guard* on this one. Serena Markstrom's full length article previewing the concert and reviewing Browne's new CD with David Lindley, *Love is Strange*, was entertaining, thoughtful, and funny.

C'mon, don't drop the ball next time. I've seen *EW* devote endless space to obscure acts coming through town who play in front of 30 people and are never heard from again. Not that these lesser known artists don't deserve some love, but you missed a big story here.

Ken Merrell
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: We write about the big acts when we have space, but Jackson Browne doesn't need a story in EW to have his talent discovered, and most of our readers already know his music by heart. It was a stunning show that packed the Cuthbert to the walls.

HEAR MY WORDS

Dearest neighbor, Eve Cienfuegos (letters, 7/22): I see from your Facebook page that you label your spiritual path "Atheist/ godless heathen/ dirt worshipper." I don't know if your tradition supports prayer of any kind, but if it does, I hope you can hear my words from your own perspective, because I sincerely hope that you will understand them.