

# Legislative UPDATE

From State Senator Joe Scarnati

FALL 2008



## Scarnati Reports on Illegal Immigration

Dear Friend:

The histories of this area and America are filled with the contributions of hardworking immigrants. Traditionally, these new Americans entered our country in the light of day, with the expressed purpose of becoming American citizens and contributing to society. America had high expectations for immigrants. The new citizens worked to meet those expectations, and those families and the nation were better for it.

**Illegal immigration drains public funds, creates unfair competition for jobs with American workers, and imposes unnecessary strains on services designed to provide assistance to hardworking taxpayers.**

I'm concerned that the message behind today's uncontrolled illegal immigration is doing a disservice to both America and the new arrivals.

It's been noted that immigration is a federal issue. The impact is felt in each state and its communities, and there are steps Pennsylvania can take to bring order to the problem.

Recently, I wrote to you about a bill that I am sponsoring in the state Senate that would deny public benefits, including Medicaid, welfare and in-state college tuition, to illegal aliens who live in Pennsylvania.

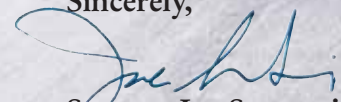
I'm pleased to report that the legislation was approved by the Senate in early April by a bipartisan vote of 39-10. The bill is now awaiting House action.

Senate Bill 9 would also ensure that the Commonwealth's more than 100,000 illegal aliens face tighter scrutiny when applying for services. It would help Pennsylvania to take the lead on the growing problem of illegal immigration by making it clear that we will not provide government benefits and services to those who enter this country outside the law.

Included in this newsletter is more information on Senate Bill 9 as well as background on the costs and consequences of illegal immigration. I am hopeful that the House of Representatives will pass this bill and the governor will sign it into law.

If you have any thoughts about this issue, or would like to offer your input, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is on the back.

Sincerely,



Senator Joe Scarnati

# Scarnati Leading Fight to Stop Illegal Immigration



## *Senate Bill 9 would:*

- Require anyone requesting public benefits in the Commonwealth to provide documentation proving they are legal residents.
- Require anyone requesting public benefits to sign an affidavit stating they are a U.S. citizen or an alien lawfully present in the United States.
- Require any applicant signing the affidavit stating they are a legal alien to have their status verified through the Federal Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlement Program (SAVE), operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Provide that any illegal alien who falsely claims they are residing in the country legally in order to obtain public benefits will have committed a second-degree misdemeanor and be subject to arrest.

## *Why this legislation is needed:*

Under current federal law, illegal aliens are prohibited from receiving federal, state or local public benefits with the exception of emergency medical care, necessary immunizations and disaster relief. However, Pennsylvania law is simply too lenient in enforcing those provisions.

There is a list of several million eligible people waiting to be legally admitted as immigrants to our country; some of them have been waiting many years for one of the numerically limited visas to become available. Illegal immigration makes a mockery of that legal process and of the people who follow the rules of our country.

Illegal aliens displace hundreds of thousands of American workers every year, and the supply of cheap labor depresses the wages and working conditions of the working poor.

The costs of illegal immigration to the taxpayer are numerous, but the largest costs are the education of their children, emergency medical care and incarceration for those arrested for committing crimes. Despite being ineligible, some illegal aliens also receive welfare the same way they get jobs: with identity documents falsely identifying them as U.S. citizens.

Unchecked illegal immigration depresses the wages of hardworking Americans, taxes the services of local government and fails to honor the memory of generations of legal immigrants who came before. Immigrants come to America for freedom and economic opportunity. They have met and will strive to meet the requirements of citizenship if that is expected of them. These measures are aimed at discouraging illegal immigration and restoring America's proud immigrant tradition.

## Scarnati Calls for Suspension of Federal Cross-Border Trucking Project

The Senate recently endorsed a resolution I sponsored that calls on the President and Congress to cease funding for the Cross-Border Trucking Demonstration Project.

The controversial demonstration project allows certain trucks of Mexican registry to be used in commerce on United States highways. Since 1982, Mexican trucks were prohibited from going further than 20 miles into the U.S., except in Arizona where the limit was 75 miles.

I offered Senate Resolution 203 because of concerns about the economic, environmental and safety issues that the program creates with regard to freight transportation in Pennsylvania and other states.

My resolution also recognizes the potential for border security issues, and roadway hazards that could be aggravated under this program. The resolution has been transmitted to the President and members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation.



## Senator Joe Scarnati

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