



## Immigrant Policy Project

# State Laws Related to Immigrants and Immigration in 2008

January 1 – November 30, 2008

State legislatures continue tackling immigration in a variety of policy arenas at an unprecedented rate. So far this year, 1305 bills have been considered in 45 state legislatures and at least 205 laws and resolutions have been enacted in 41 states. A total of 208 bills and resolutions have passed legislatures; three bills were vetoed.

The 2008 level of activity is comparable to last year, when 1,562 bills were introduced and 240 laws were enacted. As in recent years, the top three areas of interest are identification/driver's licenses, employment and law enforcement.

States continue to employ a range of enforcement and integration approaches. For example, Colorado created a pilot guest worker program to expedite the approval of foreign workers under the federal H-2A visa program and Arizona revisited employment-related legislation enacted in 2007. Iowa makes legal immigrant children and pregnant women eligible for SCHIP. Connecticut aims to address the needs of the Asian Pacific American community through English language instruction, health access and economic development. Arizona expanded its definition of smuggling of human beings to include the use of so-called "drop houses." A Maryland law focuses on innovative ways to encourage heritage language learning while also encouraging new citizens of the United States to learn and master English. Several states commissioned studies to investigate the economic and fiscal impacts of immigration, including state remedies to recover money owed to the state by the federal government. Missouri, South Carolina and Utah passed omnibus legislation addressing issues such as employment, law enforcement, public benefits, legal services and identification/licensing.

Six states did not conduct regular sessions in 2008: Arkansas, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and Texas. However, Arkansas, Nevada and Oregon held special sessions to address gas taxes and gubernatorial appointments (in Arkansas) and budgets (in Nevada and Oregon). Oregon passed legislation related to immigrants during special session.

State laws related to immigration have increased dramatically in recent years:

In 2005, 300 bills were introduced and 38 laws were enacted.

In 2006, activity doubled: 570 bills were introduced and 84 laws were enacted.

In 2007, activity tripled: 1,562 bills were introduced and 240 laws were enacted.

This report provides brief summaries of state laws enacted in 2008 that address legal immigrants, migrant and seasonal workers, refugees or unauthorized immigrants.\*

*\*Terms used in this report by and large reflect the terms used in state legislation. In some state legislative language, unauthorized immigrants are also described as illegal or undocumented immigrants or aliens.*



## State Immigration Laws and Resolutions, by Policy Arena

*As of November 30, 2008*

Main Topics	Number of Laws Enacted	States
Education	12	8
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	19	13
Health	11	8
Human Trafficking	5	5
<b>ID/DRIVER'S LICENSES AND OTHER LICENSES</b>	32	16
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT</b>	12	10
Legal Services	2	2
Miscellaneous	35	21
Omnibus/Multi-Issue Measures	3	3
Public Benefits	9	7
Voting	1	1
Resolutions	64	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	205	41

*Source: NCSL, Immigrant Policy Project, 2008*

*Prepared by:* Dirk Hegen  
 Policy Specialist  
 Immigrant Policy Project, NCSL  
 202-624-5400  
[dirk.hegen@ncsl.org](mailto:dirk.hegen@ncsl.org)  
[www.ncsl.org/programs/immig](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/immig)

*Edited by:* Ann Morse, Program Director, Immigrant Policy Project, NCSL