

Copycat immigration enforcement bill dies in Mississippi Senate

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An immigration enforcement bill that contains the same type of provisions that have Arizona's S.B. 1070 poised for a Supreme Court hearing died Tuesday in the Mississippi Senate.

Immigration Works, a national organization "advancing immigration reform that works for all Americans - employers, workers and citizens," said Tuesday in a press release that "Mississippi isn't the only state to hesitate on immigration this year. Lawmakers across the country are holding off. Some are waiting to see how the U.S. Supreme Court rules in its second immigration federalism case in so many years, U.S. v Arizona."

The Supreme Court will hear arguments about Arizona's law, known as S.B. 1070, on April 25.

S.B. 1070 has served as a model for other states and has brought to the forefront questions about how states can enforce existing federal immigration laws.

Immigration Works described "what made the difference in Mississippi": "Business leaders and law enforcement officials spoke out persuasively, expressing concerns about the consequences of HB 488. The employer coalition that opposed the bill included the Mississippi Farm Bureau, the Mississippi Poultry Association, the state chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors and several foresting and nursery groups, as well as blueberry and sweet potato growers." (Read the full press release below.)

The Immigration Policy Center writes that H.B. 488 "would have, among other things, allowed police officers to determine the immigration status of individuals they 'reasonably suspect' are in the country without documents. While HB 488 is dead, however, state House members may still be looking to keep these immigration enforcement measures alive by inserting them in other bills."

According to the Associated Press, in late March "the president of Mississippi Sheriffs' Association and the executive directors of the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police, the Mississippi Municipal League and the Mississippi Association of Supervisors" sent a letter to the state Senate "opposing an immigration enforcement bill because of what they see as unanswered questions about how it would affect police agencies and local government."

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