

Appleseed This Week

Nebraska Appleseed and Allies Defeat Anti-Immigrant Legislation

May 8, 2008 - As the Nebraska state legislative session wrapped up last month, **Nebraska Appleseed** and its community allies celebrated the defeat of several immigrant-related proposals.

State-level attempts to "crack down" on immigration have become common around the country, despite evidence that immigration has a net positive effect on U.S. job creation and state economies, and despite evidence that these measures divide communities, foster discrimination, negatively impact local economies, cost states millions in taxpayer dollars and often violate the U.S. Constitution. Nebraska's legislators took a measured, common-sense approach to the issue, choosing not to advance any anti-immigrant legislation. Nebraska Appleseed, along with its allies, testified on the following bills and resolutions:

- LB 963** would have created an expensive new bureaucracy to duplicate existing checks on immigration and citizenship status in determining eligibility for public benefits. A similar law in Colorado cost the state an additional \$2 million per year in increased administrative costs and has failed to identify any ineligible immigrants applying for benefits. The bill also would have repealed the Nebraska law that allows undocumented Nebraska high school graduates to pay in-state tuition for college.

- LB 1170** would have allowed virtually anyone to sue Nebraska businesses that knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. Such sanctions do nothing to fix a broken immigration system, and lead to increased discrimination against U.S.-born citizens and work-authorized immigrants.

- LB 784** would have penalized Nebraska businesses that knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. Nebraska Appleseed opposed this legislation and advocated instead for sanctions focused on wage and safety violations, which are a more effective means of upholding standards for all Nebraska workers.

- LB 1071** would have imposed a tax on remittances, the money immigrants send to family members in their home countries. A common misperception is that the U.S. does not benefit from remittances, when in fact 90 percent of immigrants' income stays here in the U.S., benefiting local communities and economies.

- LR 224** would have encouraged local police to sign up with Department of Homeland Security to be immigration agents, significantly undermining public safety for all Nebraskans -- when a segment of the community is afraid to seek out police to report crimes or provide information, everyone's safety is jeopardized. Police departments and major law enforcement associations around the country oppose asking local officers to become involved in federal immigration enforcement, and Nebraska Appleseed has worked in collaboration with several other Appleseed Centers to produce a guide for local police on this issue. An update of that report will be released later this month.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

Appleseed, a non-partisan and non-profit organization, is a network of public interest law Centers working to identify and address injustices in their communities. Appleseed works to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise, addressing root causes and producing practical solutions. As one of the nation's largest legal pro bono networks, Appleseed Centers work both independently and collectively, bringing their own experiences to create local solutions that are nationally relevant. We connect the top private practice lawyers, corporate counsel, law schools, civic leaders, and other professionals to tackle problems locally, at their root cause.