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**Despite Republican Assurances that Immigration Bills
SB1808/HB1355 Will Not Target Vulnerable Populations, Immigration
Lawyers Raise the Alarm Otherwise**

Immigration lawyers reveal the truth of these bills, proving that the Republicans in the State Legislature don't comprehend the bills at best, or are willfully lying at worst

Florida – Immigration lawyers have been sounding the alarm as the Governor DeSantis' backed anti-immigration bill continues to make its way to a House vote, after it was voted favorably in the Senate in a party-line vote last week. Amidst a flurry of comments opposing the bill, numerous op-eds and news conferences by diverse community leaders, Republicans in the state legislature have continuously ignored the calls to, at a minimum, revise the language to protect children, DACA and TPS recipients, and refugees from Afghanistan, Venezuela, Haiti, and others, including evacuees from Ukraine.

We have been in close conversations with attorneys from [SPLC](#), [AIJ](#), ACLU-FL, Latino Justice, CJP and many others who have been clear about the negative impact this bill will have on immigrant communities since the beginning.

Republican leadership, including the proponents of the bill, Senator Aaron Bean and Representative John Snyder, continue to misinform the public and fellow lawmakers by saying the bill will not affect these communities, however there hasn't been a change on paper of the bill's language.

The following is a statement from immigration lawyer Mark Prada, with Prada Urizar, PLLC, the First Vice President for South Florida Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA.):

"The bill continues to be unclear in its application as to which noncitizens a transportation company cannot service. First, its vagueness is such that it is impossible for transportation companies to have any fair notice of which passengers cannot be accepted, given a recent amendment of the bill which incorporates the entire Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Second, the bill's reference to "unauthorized aliens" in the INA will apply to persons who are actually legally here. That term is about what classes of persons are not allowed to be employed by businesses, regardless of legal status. So, for example, tourists are not allowed to work because it would contradict the conditions of their tourist visa, so they are "unauthorized aliens" under the INA section referenced by the bill. But they are surely allowed to be in the United States. Prohibiting their transportation goes against the economic point of encouraging tourism to our state.

But the bill goes even further, and targets vulnerable populations as a result of the way it was drafted. Children who have been abandoned, neglected or abused by their parents can obtain an SIJ petition. But even with that approved petition, they must wait in a line for their ability to apply for permanent residence which can be a few years. Even though those children are allowed to be here while waiting in line, they cannot obtain work permits until their number is available to file applications for residence. They are "unauthorized aliens" under the referenced INA provisions during the waiting period, and thus harmed by this bill.

The same goes for certain refugees. Oftentimes, the immigration authorities use parole authority to bring in refugees while they are screened for asylum. Parole is a form of legal permission to be in the United States but without a fixed status. Such persons are considered "inadmissible" until given a fixed status because parole treats them as perpetually seeking "admission" until they are finally given a status. The bill's incorporation of the entire INA will sweep in refugees in this situation. Thus, a particularly vulnerable population would be harmed simply for pursuing the process offered to them which often takes months or even years to complete.

All in all, my quarrel is that the drafting of the bill reflects a poor understanding of immigration law which causes broad, harmful consequences, and possibly even achieves results not intended by the drafters."

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