

Aliens Law Shouldn't Lead to Fear of Hiring

The New York Times

September 2, 1991, Monday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 1991 The New York Times Company

Distribution: Editorial Desk

Section: Section 1;; Section 1; Page 18; Column 3; Editorial Desk; Column 3;; Letter

Length: 585 words

Body

To the Editor:

Your Aug. 7 article on recent increased enforcement of sanctions against employers of illegal aliens points out contradictions and challenges of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which aimed to welcome illegal immigrants with histories of residence and employment in the United States through "amnesty" and to discourage employment of new arrivals through fines for employers of illegal aliens.

You mention that a General Accounting Office report showed widespread employment discrimination against legal immigrants as a result of the sanctions [some editions].

Employer sanctions were opposed by Hispanic, immigrant and other civil rights groups including the Hermandad Mexicana Nacional during the debate preceding passage of the 1986 legislation. Those groups have described the law as the only piece of legislation in United States history that institutionalizes employment discrimination against a minority. Much of immigration-related discrimination would disappear with the repeal of sanctions.

As long as employer sanctions are with us, however, our best chance of assuring equal employment opportunity in this country is to support and heed the Justice Department's campaign of public education regarding the antidiscrimination provisions of the 1986 legislation. The department's Office of Special Counsel, through a national competition begun last year, awards grants to community agencies to inform workers and employers on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the hiring of work-authorized immigrants, refugees and those granted asylum.

Thanks to these public education efforts, immigrants in communities where grants have been made are learning to identify discrimination, and employers in violation of the anti

discrimination provisions are being investigated and prosecuted. Employers who ask for work-authorization documents at the time of application, rather than waiting until the time of hiring, or who are "playing it safe" and hiring only native-born applicants, are among those subject to penalties for discrimination.

Since discriminatory practices are the result of lack of understanding of the 1986 law and fear of sanctions on the part of employers, the public information campaign aims to provide the business community with accurate and up-to-date information, so that employers can offer foreign-born job applicants the same opportunities as natives.

The Office of Special Counsel's public education program is thus of mutual benefit to immigrants and employers. It will allow immigrants to continue to make the contribution to the United States economy they have made historically, and it will enable the business community to make informed and optimal decisions in the hiring of new employees.

Aliens Law Shouldn't Lead to Fear of Hiring

The program, with little more than \$1 million available this year, is working well in communities where public education grants have been awarded, but it needs and deserves more resources. To educate all those who look foreign or who speak English with an accent, as well as every employer with four or more employees in this country, is an enormous challenge.

The Justice Department has taken on that challenge, but with modest funds. Upon the success of its public education campaign depends not only the economic advancement of America's newest residents and their employers, but also our society's well-being.

MARGO CORONA DE LEY

President, Hermandad Mexicana

Nacional Legal Center

Chicago, Aug. 12, 1991

Graphic

Drawing

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: IMMIGRATION (93%); CIVIL RIGHTS (90%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (90%); EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION (90%); DISCRIMINATION (90%); LEGISLATION (90%); IMMIGRATION **LAW** (90%); EMPLOYMENT SEARCH (89%); **LAW** ENFORCEMENT (89%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (87%); GRANTS & GIFTS (87%); PUBLIC SCHOOLS (87%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (78%); AMNESTY (78%); FINES & PENALTIES (78%); MINORITY GROUPS (78%); POLITICAL ASYLUM (78%); RECRUITMENT & **HIRING** (78%); HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (77%); RACISM & XENOPHOBIA (77%); HUMAN RIGHTS & CIVIL LIBERTIES **LAW** (76%); DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION (76%); INVESTIGATIONS (76%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (73%); REFUGEES (73%); PUBLIC FINANCE (72%)

Company: US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%)

Organization: US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%); US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (57%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%); US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (55%); OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (55%)

Industry: PUBLIC SCHOOLS (87%); ACCOUNTING (71%)

Aliens Law Shouldn't Lead to Fear of Hiring

Geographic: UNITED STATES (93%)

Load-Date: September 2, 1991

End of Document