

N.J. SUES FOR JAIL COSTS OF ILLEGALS

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Body

The state yesterday filed a \$50.5 million lawsuit against the federal government seeking reimbursement for the **cost** of imprisoning illegal immigrants who commit crimes in **New Jersey**.

With the suit, **New Jersey** joined several other states that have taken similar action against the federal government over illegal immigrants.

"**New Jersey** taxpayers should no longer be forced to bear the **costs** of an ineffective federal immigration policy," said Gov. Whitman. "The federal government should put its money where its policy is and take responsibility for the impact of its failure to stem the tide of illegal immigration."

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court here, says about 500 inmates in the state prison system are illegal immigrants. The state is seeking \$13 million for housing these prisoners during fiscal 1994 and \$37.5 million for the expected **costs** in future years.

Among the states taking similar action against the federal government, California is seeking nearly \$2 billion for the **cost** of imprisoning illegal immigrants, and \$370 million more for providing health care. Florida, Texas, Illinois and Arizona either have filed similar suits or plan to do so.

In Washington yesterday, lawmakers from five states said they were signing a legal brief in support of Florida's \$1 billion lawsuit.

"Illegal immigration is a federal problem that is being borne by the state and local governments along our borders," U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R., Texas), said at a news conference.

"This is not a local issue; it is a federal issue," Hutchison said.

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