

## **Schlafly urges state to act Leader of conservative group calls on state to deny illegal immigrants benefits, scholarships.**

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### **Body**

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Phyllis **Schlafly urged** a panel of **state** legislators Monday to make up for what she sees as the failure of the federal government to enforce immigration laws.

The House Special Committee on Immigration Reform is holding about a dozen hearings across the **state** to decide whether **state** legislation on the issue is needed. Monday's hearing, held at Harris Stowe University, was the first in St. Louis.

"Missouri should **act** now before we have to face the reality of the problems other **states** have" with large numbers of **illegal immigrants**, such as California, Texas and Arizona, **Schlafly** said. The latest census figures show that Hispanics -- both legal and **illegal** -- made up less than 3 percent of Missouri's population.

**Schlafly** is president of the Eagle Forum, a national social **conservative** political organization based in Alton. The organization believes **illegal immigrants** are placing a burden on hospitals, schools and law enforcement and taking entry-level jobs away from Americans.

Schlafly says many **states** are taking up the issue; and Georgia and Colorado recently passed controversial legislation that, among other things, aims to trim **illegal immigrants'** use of public services. About 540 immigration-related bills were introduced in **state** legislatures this year, twice as many as last year, **Schlafly** said.

She wants to see **state** legislation that would **deny illegal immigrants** access to **state benefits** and public **scholarships** to college. The law should also heavily sanction employers who hire undocumented workers, she said, and require law enforcement officers to check the immigration status of everyone they arrest.

Others who testified at the hearing, however, **urged** the committee to leave the issue to Congress and warned against a confusing patchwork of **state** laws.

"Congress will **act**," said David Holsclaw, director of a school in Kansas City that teaches English as a second language to adults. "Let's simmer down."

Ruth Ehresman, with the Missouri Budget Project, disputed the idea that **illegal immigrants** are a drain on the **state's** education and health care systems. She said a recent study shows that an estimated 35,000 to 65,000 undocumented people in Missouri pay between \$29 million and \$57 million a year in sales, property and income taxes.

They are ineligible for the **state's** Medicaid program, subsidized child care, temporary cash assistance and housing assistance. Only one-sixth of that number are children, which cost about \$7,500 a year to educate.

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"They contribute \$20 to \$30 million more in taxes than they actually use," Ehresman said.

Doctors and school officials asked that they not be required to police for **illegal immigrants** or to place them in a position of **denying** people health care services or an education.

Dr. David Campbell is director of La Clinica, which is staffed by volunteers and run on contributions. The clinic had nearly 10,000 patients visits last year. "Out of those 10,000, how many are undocumented?" he said. "I don't know. We don't ask, and I hope we don't ever have to ask."

## Notes

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Immigration reform

## Graphic

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PHOTO

PHOTO - (Phyllis **Schlafly**)

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